



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

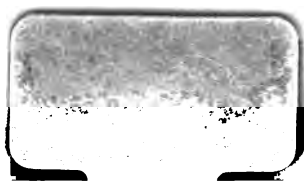
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



LITTLE LADDIE





5.

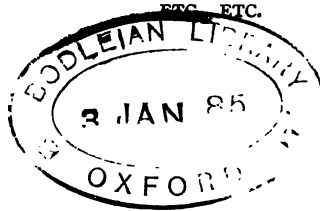




Johnny is quite sure that the salt will answer ; but somehow it doesn't.

LITTLE LADDIE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"LITTLE MOTHER," "LITTLE ROSY'S TRAVELS,"



With Twenty-four Illustrations by L. Frölich.

SEELEY, JACKSON, AND HALLIDAY, 54, FLEET STREET,
LONDON. MDCCCLXXIV.

2527. e.22

CONTENTS.


CHAPTER	PAGE
I. JOHNNY'S NEW SHOES	I
II. THE OLD UMBRELLA	15
III. AT ELM COTTAGE	32
IV. THE TUMBLE	48
V. RATHER UPPISH	62
VI. JOHNNY LISTENS TO MR. DON'T LIKE	81
VII. THE LITTLE LADDIE GROWS WISER .	100
VIII. A TIRED BOY	118
IX. A GREAT FRIGHT	134
X. MAY COMES TO THE RESCUE . .	148
XI. THE FIELD LESSON	172

CHAPTER	PAGE
XII. MAY'S PRESENT	185
XIII. A NEW GAME	198
XIV. JOHNNY LEARNS BY EXPERIENCE .	210
XV. A NEW FRIEND FOUND . . .	218
XVI. JOHNNY TRIES TO BE USEFUL .	229
XVII. JOHNNY'S SCHEME	241
XVIII. MORE ABOUT MAY	250
XIX. WHAT MAY TAUGHT JOHNNY . .	258
XX. SUCH A CAPITAL PLAN	267
XXI. A PRETTY SIGHT	272
XXII. THE WOUNDED BIRD	280
XXIII. FATHER'S PLAN	289
XXIV. JOHNNY'S PET LOST AND FOUND AGAIN	296

LITTLE LADDIE.

CHAPTER I.

JOHNNY'S NEW SHOES.

‘ND these came in the great big basket too—the big basket which Mr. Wright, the carrier, brought to us yesterday evening, Johnny. And they came from granny, you know, dear old granny.’

It was Johnny's good little sister May who said all this ; and as she

talked to him, she was earnestly trying to persuade five of Johnny's ten toes to go into one of a first-rate pair of new shoes.

'Me heard him ! me heard bang, bang on the door ; and me helped to open the basket,' cried Master Johnny, with a revived enthusiasm about the great event.

'And you remember the dear granny, too, don't you ?' said May, quite as eagerly.

'No, me don't,' said Johnny.

'You don't !' repeated his sister ; 'and she was so good to you ; and it's only just one year since she went away — only last summer ! Well, you have got a short memory !'

‘Me don’t know what memory stuff is; but me know me don’t member granny one bit,’ returned the little man very positively.

‘Then I think you ought to,’ said May, a little seriously. ‘It isn’t good to forget people who are kind to us, father says so. But granny doesn’t forget so soon: she remembers mother when she was a little baby.’

‘Mammy wasn’t ever a ikkle baby,’ returned Johnny opening his eyes very wide.

‘Oh, but she was, Johnny—a tiny tiny—just like you were when you wore that long white frock that mother keeps in her drawer, which

went over your feet, you know, and kept them warm when you couldn't run about.'

'Like the tiny tiny at the shop,' said Johnny, chuckling. 'Oh! May, me couldn't be like that; and mammy couldn't, me sure.'

'But she says she was, and that granny carried her about, and fed her with a spoon, and rocked her to sleep in our big cradle; and mammy must know,' said May.

'Johnny tink it very funny,' returned the young rogue, in a very unconvinced tone of voice.

'And granny remembers it all quite well,' continued May; 'so you see it's no wonder that she remem-

bers us, and what we were like only a year ago ; though still I don't quite see how she knew the sizes of our shoes : because we've grown, you see ; or how she should recollect exactly how much stuff mammy takes for a gown, or father's fancy for blue neckerchers. She must have a very good memory, indeed. I shouldn't think she ever found it hard to learn her hymns when *she* was a little girl. Ah, Johnny, Johnny ! It's a fine thing for you that she has got a good memory, or else you'd never have got these splendid new shoes.'

'Johnny don't much care for new shoes. Johnny like the sweeties best,' remarked the little fellow quietly

‘Oh, Johnny, Johnny! Why, you are a silly boy! When you haven’t had a new pair of shoes for ever so long; and when you know that daddy can’t afford to buy you any. Of course, the sweeties are very nice; but they’ll be gone in no time; and just think how long these strong shoes will last! Besides, you needn’t get your feet wet now, nor have any pins or needles running into them.’

‘Pins don’t run into Johnny’s feet! Pins can’t run at all. Do they ever get into ’ou’s feet?’ returned the little fellow, as if such an idea had never entered his head before.

‘They might,’ answered May,

gravely. To which Johnny, after a minute's reflection, rejoined :—

‘Pussy don’t wear boots. Does pussy have pins in her feet?’

‘I don’t know. You had better ask her,’ said May, laughing.

‘Me look at her feet. Me look underneath,’ Johnny said quickly.

‘Well, at any rate, it will look better to wear shoes on Sundays, and when we want to be nice,’ remarked May, beginning to be half convinced by Johnny’s arguments. For the fact was, that both the children had had to do without shoes so long now, and had seen so many other children doing without them, that she hardly knew what to think.

They did not live where they used to live, when she remembered herself a tiny child—in the days when father could always buy everything she wanted; for some time ago they had come to a place where most of the children didn't often wear shoes. And so, though mother always said she couldn't a-bear such rough ways, yet—because they were poorer, they all had to get used to them. May, hearing what mother thought about it, certainly padded about in hopes of better times; but Johnny, never thinking, was quite content; and his little toes learned to love their liberty.

Nevertheless, there was another

way of looking at the matter, which his thoughtful little sister felt bound to put before him ; and that was :—
‘ What would granny say if she heard that they didn’t think much of her nice presents ? Wouldn’t she be sorry ? Wouldn’t she be very much hurt ?’

Now, as a rule, our little friend had always believed what May said. She was like a little mother to him, you see ; for his big mother had to go out to work so much, now that the father was not so strong and able to work as he used to be. And because his May May, as he loved to call her, was a steady young thing, and as careful of her pet boy as any

old nurse ; the little laddie used very seldom to dispute her opinion.

But it was really hard to come in to this—besides that, as he grew older, he was beginning to have views of his own ; and when she began again to try to coax the shoes on, poor Johnny said, ‘They so tiff, May. They hurt me feet,’ with a face as woe-begone as if the said feet really were going to be condemned each one to solitary confinement in a narrow prison.

‘Oh ! they won’t hurt when you get used to them,’ replied May ; ‘and granny will be so sorry if you don’t wear them. I think she would cry. But you must not double up your

toes so, when I put them on. Come, let's have another try. Now, Johnny, boy, look. This is the way. And you must learn to put them on yourself, you know;—a great big boy like you !

So the little man put his hand on his sister's shoulder, and gravely began to study the subject, though it was not one that he very much cared about.

For, you see, this little Johnny of ours was rather a good little man. He knew what he liked and what he disliked as well as anybody; but then ever since he was *quite* a baby he had been taught by daddy and mammy, and by May May too, that there

are two small words, 'ought' and 'oughtn't,' and that these must be attended to, before any Mr. Like or Don't Like in the world.

Certainly, Mr. Ought or Oughtn't sometimes cost him a few tears. Still, in the end, the one of them who had to be attended to, generally got the victory, and packed Mr. Like or Don't Like, whichever it happened to be, about his business.

Then, when he was really gone, Johnny was generally a good deal happier.

And so he was this time, as you shall hear.

Mr. Ought said, 'Come, get on those shoes as fast as you can, and



"Now, Johnny boy, look, this is the way."



try to like them to please granny, and never mind what Mr. Don't Like says about it.'

And Johnny let the shoes come on, one after another, and then slid down off the bed to see how he could walk in them.

Now there was no carpet in that room; and do you know those shoes made such a delightful noise in tramping over the boards, that their young owner soon shouted again with pleasure.

So May May, when she sat down to write her letter to granny—as she had to do very soon after—was able to put in it that 'Johnny was in great joy about his new shoes, and

making such a noise with them ! She wished granny could hear him !

It was not long since May could write a letter ; but since she had been able, she often did so to please Johnny, who, besides always hearing what she put in it (for there were no secrets between him and May), was very fond of acting postman.

He could not with this letter, you see, because it was going too far off ; but when she wrote to some of her friends, he could take the letter, you know, and wait for the answer too ; and that made him feel quite an important man.

CHAPTER II.

THE OLD UMBRELLA.

IT strikes me, that Johnny's granny would not have been so very shocked as May supposed, if she had heard that he could not remember her ; for, you see, a whole year was a good piece out of his little life—a larger piece than it was out of May's—at least, in one way ; for she, having lived longer, her life would cut up into more of such pieces than his would.

This grandmother, the one who liked to be called granny, I mean, was mother to his mother. Very kind and good she was to small folks ; but then she lived such a long way off, that she could not see Johnny and May very often. She could only think about them, and talk about them, and sometimes send letters or nice parcels, like the one we heard of, besides asking the good God, who lives far above the blue sky, to look down on them, and do them good. That was the best thing she could do ; and she did it very often.

But there was another grandmother whom Johnny did know very well, and she lived not so very far off, with

the grandfather who had once made for Johnny a curious little soldier, with arms and legs that could be moved by a string at the back, which some of his young friends know all about very well indeed, though no doubt there are some who do not.

Well, this grandfather said that if his name must be shortened at all, he would be called granddad; and as for the grandmother, she couldn't see why her name wanted altering; so, after a vast number of attempts, the little fellow got as near to it as 'dancer;' and with that she was obliged to be content.

These old people were father and mother to Johnny's father, you

must know; and though they were rather particular about some things, such as dirty feet on a clean floor—yet our little brother and sister liked nothing better than to pay a visit to Elm Cottage, where they often had buttered toast for tea, and heard lots and lots of stories.

I think they would have been in and out there every day if they could; but, happily for the good old folks, the cottage was just too far to allow of such constant invasions. Indeed, it was considered too far for them to get at, unless either father or mother could go with them—until this afternoon of which I am going to tell you.

And that was shortly after the arrival of the new boots.

There had come a letter in the morning to say that old granddad had had a fall—his stick, a regular old friend, having given way under him, and let him down.

Of course, Johnny would not have minded such a tumble as that one bit ; or, at most, it would have cost him a few tears, and mother would have had to kiss the place. But, unfortunately, old granddad had no mother to do that for him ; so, what was he to do ? Besides, he was heavy, and his limbs were stiff : and when he was down, it was not so easy for him to get up again, you see.

And he hurt himself a good deal, and frightened his old wife, when he got in doors again, by looking pale and shakey : so that she sent off next morning to ask her son to come up and see him, or to send his wife, if he could not come himself.

Now Johnny's father had not had good work for a long time ; and just then he had got a job, which seemed to promise to last ; so he turned to his wife and asked :—

‘ Couldn't ye run over and see if there be much the matter, mother ? and if so be there be, why I must go over myself this evening, after I've done work ; only it'll be late.’

‘ I'm sure I'd go, and want no bid-

ding, Ben,' said the good woman; 'for ye know very well that I've always counted your folk just the same as my own; but what am I to do about the washing at the great house? It's to be done so very particular to-day, the housekeeper says; and if I don't go to it, why I shall lose the work.'

'And I wish, with all my heart, I could afford thou should'st lose it. I'd rather be slaving myself, than have thee slave and leave the poor bairns so much alone,' returned honest Ben with a heavy sigh. 'And that neither one of us should be able to go up and see after the old people too, it do seem hard.'

‘Father,’ said little May, coming forward, ‘don’t you be too sorry; it’s all of God’s sending, isn’t it? You always tells me so. Let Johnny and me go up. We can quite well now, I’m sure; for we’re bigger than what we were; and we’ll be back by dinner-time, and tell you all about it. We won’t get playing on the road, I promise you that we won’t; do let us go, father.’

‘What, all alone! Two scraps like you—a good three-quarters of a mile, and along a lonesome sort of a way!’ And he looked at his wife, saying, ‘I never heard of such a thing; did you, mother?’

‘Oh, yes; I know *you* have,

mother,' said May; 'for Matty Parker goes by pretty near every day all alone, and past grandfather's; that is not quite the same road, but a further way, you know. Her mother sends her ever so often of errands.

'*Her*' mother,' repeated the father, with a look of disgust. 'Don't name her, May, along with thine. Poor Matty's mother wouldn't care one straw if all her children were lost to-morrow. She's a bad, wicked woman!'

'But God takes care of Matty. She never hurts, though she do go all alone. And He'll take care of us too, father; so let us go. I'm not afraid.'

'God never promised me, that if I neglected my children, He'd take

care of them,' returned the father, thoughtfully. 'What say you, wife?'

'Well,' she said, 'I'm not sure but what our May is right. You're not neglecting of them, Ben; you're doing your best to keep them well and hearty, and so am I too, you know. And here's the poor old father wanting you; and you can't go. It seems to me that we must trust a bit more than we have done, and let them go. Their clothes won't tempt anyone to hurt them, poor dears; and they knows their way, and most people knows them. They won't come to no harm, Ben. I'd let 'em go, if I was you.'

'Well, if thee bain't afraid, mother,

why, I s'pose, I mustn't,' returned the father, shrugging his shoulders ; ' but really, you women, there's no understanding yer. To think o' your being bolder than a rough fellow like me now.'

' A rough fellow like you, father !' cried little May. ' You're not a rough fellow at all, I'm sure ; but the very best, the very *goodest* of all the fathers in the world ! Only mother knows how I take care of Johnny all day long ; and she knows God takes care of us both at home ; so, of course, He'll take care of us when we're out too. I'm not afraid one bit.'

' And I b'lieve He will,' said the good father, rubbing his hand across

his eyes, 'because it seems like a *duty* for you to go, child; but, mind you, if you were to go running into danger, or I were to throw you into it—'twouldn't be the same thing at all; so now, take care what you're about, and don't steal liberty another time. But, dear me, how it does rain !'

The children looked rather blank at that: for it certainly was something of a downpour; but the father said that when a great black cloud that was just overhead had passed, it would not be so bad; and there was one comfort—they could each go well shod—so he thought.

Johnny did not know what that meant; but when it was explained

to him, he ran off to find his good shoes, saying, 'What fun it will be to show them to granddad! He'll wonder who makes all the noise, and think I'm a big man.'

But poor May looked down and said nothing; for her shoes were gone to the shop to have a nail knocked down that would stick up and hurt her; and she was afraid that when mother thought of that she would not let her go.

However, May's mother didn't make difficulties of trifles; and she knew that her little girl had been obliged to run about so long without shoes, that she would be no worse off now than she had been.

The thing was, to find the old umbrella, a great big affair that was not often used, because the mother's work was near, and when it rained she put a shawl over her head and ran out; and as for the father, he was used to wet, and despised such things.

So there was a grand hunt for the old thing; for it had been put away, and no one knew where it was: but mother hunted, and May hunted, and Johnny hunted. And, after all, it was the little man who found it. Being so small, he could go under all sorts of things; and the umbrella had tumbled down behind a chest of drawers. And there it lay, never

thinking, as Johnny said, that he would find it and drag it out, and make it go open.

However, open it he could not by himself; for it had got very stiff; but at last the father made it open, whether it liked or not; and then it looked such a great thing! There was one point that would stick out beyond where it was intended to reach certainly; but that could not be helped. There was room enough under it for both—and that was the great thing; and Johnny could help May to hold it up.

So when mother had charged May not to lose sight of Johnny, and Johnny had promised to be a good

boy, the children set off, feeling quite grand to think that they were trusted on such an important errand.

It did not rain much when they left home ; but very soon it came down again in torrents ; and the wind rose and blew, and pulled at the umbrella ; so that poor May's arms got quite tired.

And she began to feel afraid that she would never be able to hold it up all the way.

Of course, Johnny does not care for the rain, not he. It wouldn't hurt him if he did get wet, he said ; and it was rather fun to march along with all that pitter patter over head.

But then he had got nobody to



Johnny doesn't care for the rain ; not he !



take care of, you see ; and that made a great difference, because he had only his small share of the weight of the umbrella to carry, and not a great weight of anxiety on his little mind as well, like his sister.

Poor May ! She was rather young to have to bear so much of that sort of thing. However, she was very brave, I must say, and went toiling on all that long way, although it blew and blew, and rained and rained, and hardly anybody passed them on the road ; and it was very lonely and dreary, and seemed, oh, such a long distance !

CHAPTER III.

AT ELM COTTAGE.

AT last Elm Cottage came in sight—and that raised May's spirits; and for about two minutes also it left off raining too: so that she could lay the umbrella down, and rest her arms. But it soon began again, and she said to Johnny, 'Let's have a run for a change. You keep close to me, and we'll soon be at grandfather's.'

So they made a fresh start, and

seemed to get a great bit nearer. But still there was another good piece to go ; and now Johnny began to complain of his shoes.

‘ They so ’tiff. They hurt me,’ cried the little man, whimpering ; and then he added, ‘ Me can’t run in shoes.’

‘ Oh ! but you must,’ said May decidedly. ‘ I only wish I had got mine on. My feet wouldn’t be so cold.’

‘ Me don’t care for cold. Me can’t bear them,’ said Johnny. ‘ Me take them off and carry them.’

‘ Oh ! no ; you mustn’t ; father will be so angry ; and you promised to be a good boy,’ cried May.

And then Johnny began to sob and fret, until he saw how near they were getting, when a new thought struck him.

‘Johnny take them off when he gets in ; Johnny can.’

‘Oh ! yes ; if you like,’ returned his sister ; ‘only then grandfather won’t hear the nice noise.’

‘Me don’t care,’ said Johnny, brightening up, as he peeped under the umbrella, and saw how close they were.

Another gust of wind, and another brave stand against it on the part of his steady young sister ; and then the battle is done, and they both cry out at once, ‘Here we are at last !’ and off



“ Here we are at last, May ! ” And off go Johnny’s shoes.



go Johnny's shoes, as he flings himself out from under the umbrella and in at the door of the kitchen, while May still struggles with her great, unwieldy machine, and tries with all her might to keep it from turning inside out, and to persuade it to shut down, which apparently it was as loath to do, as before it had been to go up at her pleasure.

It had never been used to such a young mistress, you see ; and old things don't like to be ordered about by young ones.

Well, though Johnny had now no clattering shoes on to announce his arrival, yet the old people upstairs soon heard the young voices, and,

never dreaming that these small folks had made the journey alone, the good old lady cried out :—

‘Come up, my gal, do, and bring the childer with you; don’t be afeard; grandfather ’ll like well to see ’em. They’ll do him all the good in the world. He isn’t so bad to-day, only a bit shaken. Come up, do, and welcome; and don’t wait for me—I’m just a-getting his coat on, and can’t come down.’

‘Do be quick, May,’ cried Johnny, pulling her. ‘Danmover’s calling us.’

‘I know,’ said May, who heard every word, and was growing quite weary with her struggles outside;

‘but I can’t help it. This thing won’t come in. What shall I do? I think I must let it fly away. Do go and tell grandmother.’

So the little fellow went forward to the foot of the stairs and shouted,

‘It’s only May and me, danmover; and May can’t get in.’

‘Only you two childer!’ cried the grandmother, ‘and you’ve come all alone in this storm?’

‘No,’ said Johnny; ‘the umbrella’s come too; but it won’t come in, danmover: and so May can’t.’

‘So May can’t!’ repeated the old man upstairs, laughing heartily. ‘Well, to be sure! But don’t you be served out by it, child. Turn

him on his side, and bring him in open, and let him fly about in the kitchen, if he must fly anywhere.'

'I didn't know an umbrella was a *him*!' said May to herself, as she gladly took the hint; and, after a good deal of wriggling management, succeeded in getting her refractory burden safely inside the door; 'but I'm glad it isn't a *she*, because I shouldn't like such a tiresome creature to be called the same as I am.'

And then she followed Johnny, who, by this time, was nearly at the top of the stairs.

There they had to stand by the fire and get dry; and May had to tell her story, and explain how it was

they came all alone : and grandmother wondered ; and grandfather laughed, and chucked them each under the chin, and told May she was a brave little woman, and a good girl too, for thinking so much of her old granddaddy.

And then he showed them both his poor bruised knee, and bid them tell father and mother how at first he thought he had broken his head, and what a shaking he had got, so that he must stop in bed a bit to get over it.

After that, Johnny got what he liked even better than buttered toast, and that was, a nice slice of plum-cake. He enjoyed it so much, that

his grandfather said it did him good to see him eat; for the dear old man loved to see little children happy. And May had a slice too, and she liked it very much, though she did not pick out all the plums to eat first as Johnny did, nor make quite such large eyes over it.

This was not a cake of the grandmother's making, though sometimes she did make very nice ones when she happened to have the flour and the plums, and all the goodies to put in. It was a piece of one that a neighbour had brought the evening before, when she came in to have a cup of tea, and cheer up the old people after their upset; and grandfather

said he had eaten his share then, and that he was as glad as could be to have just two slices left for his boy's young ones when they came to look after him.

It sounded very funny to May and Johnny to hear their father and mother, who were such big, grown-up people, called 'my gal and my boy;' but when Johnny made a funny face, and looked as if he were going to laugh, his grandfather said:—

'Do you know, my little lad, that your daddy used to sit on my knee when he was a little one like you, ay, and a deal smaller too; and that's why, when I think of him now that I am old, and sit in my big

chair, and turn over things in my mind, he never seems like the tall fellow that he is, but a mite of a brat, muling and puling just as you do.'

'Me don't mooly pooly,' exclaimed Johnny, quite indignantly.

'Oh, you don't, don't you? I forgot,' said the old man, chuckling to himself. 'Well, you needn't look so fierce about it; but how comes it that neither one of you has any shoes on this soaking wet day?'

'Father didn't think it would rain like this,' replied May; and then she proceeded to explain what had happened to her own shoes.

'Well, but about this little lad's?'

pursued the old man, while the grandmother took him on her knee, and began to cuddle him very close to her, and to give him a great many kisses.

But Johnny did not look up or answer ; he only hemmed and coughed, and got very red. In fact, I should not wonder if, when he remembered all the fuss that he had made about them, he had a sort of idea that this was just what the grandfather meant by muling and puling.

And May did not speak, though she looked rather amused ; for I do not think she quite knew what Johnny would like her to say.

At last, making a bold effort, the little fellow struggled off his grandmother's knee, saying, ' Me fetch 'em ; 'ou see.'

So he bundled downstairs very quickly, and almost as quickly got up again with the shoes in his hand. And running up to his sister, he said, ' P'ease, put 'em on. Me let grand-dad hear the nice noise.'

And then you should have seen him marching up and down in noisy triumph, much to the amusement of the old couple !

But May remembered her promise, and knew that it was now time for them to go ; so she asked Johnny if he meant to keep them on or carry

them ; to which he answered, 'Teep 'em on, May, of course.'

'Yes ; of course,' said the grandmother ; but when May whispered that Johnny said they hurt him, she began feeling all round the edges and stretching them a bit ; and then she soon remembered that she had lately found a good pair of her own Ben's socks, Johnny's father, you know ; and when the little boy got them on first, and then the shoes, he was quite comfortable, and ready for his march homewards.

But the grandmother said [that she must go down and see what was the matter with that naughty umbrella, before she could let them start. So

the two children bid good-bye to the dear old grandfather ; and then each took one of ' danmover's' hands, and down the steep cottage stairs they went, to see whether the obstinate thing had flown out of the window, or whether it was waiting quietly for their return.


They had not to look far, however, for there it was up in the corner, where the wind had taken it out of May's tired hands. So grandmother made it go up and down several times, to take off the stiffness, and rubbed the catch with a little oil ; but she said it was a rickety, disagreeable old thing, and she hoped they would not want to use it.

When her ship came in, she would buy May a new one; but she did not know when that would be; and May felt rather in despair about it; for grandmother had talked of that said ship so long: and it had never come.

Fortunately, however, when they opened the door, they saw that the sun was shining brightly, and that there was a beautiful blue sky. So, instead of May's tired hands having to hold it up, Johnny found it very good fun to drag it after him, at least, for some distance: so the journey home was as easy and pleasant as possible.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TUMBLE.

‘AMMY will be so glad to hear that grandfather is not *very* ill, and that he was so pleased to see us,’ said May, as they got near their own door, and she found that her little brother’s steps began to flag. ‘But I think we shall be in first,’ she went on. ‘It isn’t dinner-time yet, I know, because the shade isn’t all off that side of the barn; and it always is

now before the taties come out of the pot. I wonder who put them in though, to-day ! There was nobody at home to do it. Perhaps mother made a big pudding instead, and put it in before she went out. She always says it doesn't matter how long our sort of puddings boil ; they are all the better for it.'

'Johnny like pudding,' said the little fellow, quickening his steps ; and May smiled to see that her device had succeeded ; for he was beginning to drag and tire her arm.

But another thing helped him on too. Just at this moment, Neighbour Johnson's cat came out of the house, accompanied by her two

white kittens. Such pretty things they were, and almost exactly alike ! Indeed, a stranger would not have seen any difference between them, I am sure.

But Johnny knew them apart, quite well ; for one of them was promised to him as soon as it was old enough to leave its mother ; and that one had some little brown marks over one eye, and on the tip of its tail.

So, letting go of May's hand and of the umbrella too, off ran the little laddie, calling out, ' Poof, poof, poof,' which meant pussie, you see, only he could not pronounce his letter s, and so could not say it right.

But pussie was not particular about that. She loved her little master, that was to be ; because he often gave her some of his milk, and things that she liked, and because they had many a good game together with reels of cotton and balls of string, and such things as kittens love to play with.

But she loved her good mother too, and would not always come away from her for anyone ; and just now, when Johnny called, she looked first at him, and then at the great cat, and did not seem to know what to do.

But, because she hesitated, Johnny was more eager ; and off he darted, faster than his small legs would

properly carry him, intending to pounce on his little treasure and secure it, whether it would or not. Going so fast, however, he did not look where he went ; and soon tumbled right over a heap of straw, and sticks, and rubbish that had been collected by some industrious boy who was employed to keep the road tidy.

So down Johnny went right into the mud ; and when he got up there was his pinafore all dirty and his hands quite black, and his mouth all full of mud. He was in what we call a sorry plight.

‘ Me wish Dick wouldn’t make heaps,’ he cried, scrambling up

again very quickly ; for he remembered getting a scolding not long ago for being a dirty boy, and giving mother so much trouble in cleaning him ; and now, though he was not hurt a bit, Johnny began rubbing his hands and knees, and fretting as he looked round to see who was near, half afraid that he would be blamed again.

May was at his side in a minute, and saying, ‘ Oh ! Johnny, boy, why didn’t you look where you went ? There, it’s no use crying ! Make haste and come in, and let’s see if we can’t make you a clean child before mother comes in.’

‘ Me got no clean pinny,’ sobbed

the little man, somewhat comforted by hearing himself called 'Johnny, boy !' when he had an idea that he had been too careless to deserve any pet names.

'Oh ! yes, you have ; for I washed the stains out of that one you spoilt yesterday, and hung it up to dry ; and it looks quite nice,' said May. 'So if you make haste we can have you quite smart in a few minutes ; and you know mother always likes clean boys.'

So the three pussies were left to their own devices ; and while the mother-pussie sat down and gave her two babies' paws a very good licking, May took her big baby upstairs, and

got a basin and water to wash off all the muddy marks from his face, and hands, and knees.

‘None on socks,’ said Johnny, stroking his grandmother’s present with great satisfaction.

‘No ; that is a good thing,’ said May ; ‘you must take care of them, and keep them nice and clean. Only think that father once wore them ! Mustn’t grandmother take care of things, to have kept these safe all this great while ?’

So saying, she lifted the large brown basin, and put it on a chair to be just the right height for Johnny, and then poured some water out, and got a towel and some soap.

The first thing was to make his face clean ; and this May did by giving it a good scrubbing with the corner of the towel. That was an operation which Johnny never liked ; for sometimes the soap got into his eyes, and sometimes into his mouth ; and then, when he was very dirty, he had to be rubbed rather hard to get him clean. Indeed, I do not think that anybody likes to have his face washed. It is much nicer to wash it oneself if one can ; but then as small people like this little man cannot well perform the operation, why I suppose they must put up with the inconvenience of having it done for them.

However, Johnny did not see the

dirt on his face ; so it did not trouble him so much as that on his hands.

He was in a great hurry to get them clean, and put them straight into the water without waiting his sister's time, saying, ' Johnny wash them his own self.'

' Well, try,' said May, thinking it was really time that he helped himself a little, and seeing no reason why he should not wash his own hands.

So, instead of taking the soap away, she showed him how to use it, teaching him to put a little on, and then rub one hand with the other. But he found it harder than he expected ; for though he rubbed and rubbed, they did not seem to get

clean. And the right hand especially was very difficult, because the left one would not rub hard—it was so stupid ! Johnny said.

After all, May was obliged to finish them off, or they would not have got done all day, I think. But she said, ‘Never mind ; that’s very well for the first time. You shall try again to-morrow, and soon you’ll be quite a handy boy. Only think when you can wash your own hands, and put on your shoes and socks !’

‘And mine own pinny too,’ said Johnny, with a very gleeful look on his bright little face. ‘Den me soon be a man, won’t me, May !’

‘Well, I don’t know,’ answered



"Johnny wash them his own self."



May, laughing. 'I think I shall be a woman before you are a man, because I'm older ; and I don't expect to be a woman yet. There's lots of things I've got to learn first.'

'Is 'dere ?' said Johnny, wonderingly ; for it seemed to him that his sister could do most things.

'Oh, yes !' said May. 'You see I can't wash clothes yet, at least, not properly, only a mark or so out of a pinafore, or the skirt of my frock, you know ; and that's nothing to speak of. Why, there are father's shirts and mother's gowns, and the sheets off the beds, and lots of things that I couldn't do : and women must be able to do all such things. And

then . I can't cut out, or even sew very fast ; and I can't scrub the floors, nor make the puddings—at least, only about one or two—oh ! it would never do for me to be a big woman yet awhile. And there's lots of things for men to know too. Just see all the things that father can do ! Why, he can drive a horse and cart ; and I believe sometimes he helps to build great big houses. He can load a hay-waggon, I know, because I've seen him. Oh, Johnny ! you mustn't be a man for ever so long !'

‘ Johnny make haste and learn. May show him how to dig holes,’ returned the young gentleman with

great determination. ‘Johnny isn’t a baby now ; he knows he isn’t. Johnny soon be a big man and build houses.’

‘Johnny’s a very funny boy, I think,’ replied his sage young sister, who, between you and me, had an idea, I must tell you, that there were not many little boys so clever as her brother, and who often used to think that something must some day come of this positive way that he had of taking things into his head.

CHAPTER V.

RATHER UPPISH.

BUT perhaps you may wonder how it was that the little sister, May, came to know so much herself as to be able to write letters, which you will remember I told you she could do, rather cleverly, some time ago. For it must seem to you that she was always employed in taking care of her little brother, and so had no time to learn herself.

However, this was not always the case. When he was a baby, yes, and even after he could walk about, May certainly had spent most of her time with him ; for at that time the school was too far off for her to attend.

Still, even then, her good mother had no notion of letting her grow up a dunce ; and, as she could read herself, she made May read to her for a little while every day, and then set her a copy to write. And she did not leave it to May's fancies, whether she would do her lessons or leave them alone, you know, but what she set her that she would have done, and done properly.

After that, the family moved right away to quite another part of the country, where there was a school close by ; and then, for a 'while, mother stayed at home and took care of her baby boy, while the little sister went to learn with many other children.

But that did not last long, because the father fell ill and got out of work ; and then there was nothing for it but for the mother to get all she could to do, and for May once more to act nurse. And besides that, I must tell you that both the children got the whooping-cough, and were not wanted among the other scholars ; or else perhaps

Johnny would have gone, as he was going soon, to sit on the gallery with the babies, while May learnt her lessons in earnest with the bigger ones.

It was holiday time, now, however, so there was no school for anybody, unless for small folks who liked to play at it. But our young friends had a great fancy for amusing themselves in that way; and indeed it was not only play with them. For Johnny kept to his purpose of soon learning how to grow a big man; and May was bent on teaching him all she knew herself.

There were some things, however, which her little laddie fancied much

better than others. For instance, when she tried him with A, B, C, he always preferred looking at the pictures to learning the letters; and though he soon mastered round O and crooked S, she could not get him any farther. When he had said these two, he would say, 'No more A's, May, Johnny learn about dis,' and then turn over to one of the pictures and beg: ' 'Splain dis to Johnny; Johnny like learning about dis.'

May always laughed; because he was so funny about it, and had such a positive little way; but she used to say: 'Must learn it, Johnny, before you are a man; must, you know.'

But to this the determined young

gentleman would always reply :—

‘Me not a bigger man ’nuff, yet.’

‘Then what will you learn, Johnny?’ she would say; and he generally chose digging, going off to fetch his spade, and returning to say, ‘Dig great, big hole like father; May teach Johnny.’

If May did try to teach him this art, however, he always maintained that his own way was the best; and as she did not think that this mattered, she generally ended by getting something else to do, and leaving him to dig away until he was tired of that occupation.

Sometimes, however, she tried a slate instead of a spelling-book, and

thought to entice him to make strokes, and pothooks, and round O's, and so to make him begin writing without knowing what he was doing.

But it did not often answer ; for Master Johnny, who had a very sturdy wrist of his own, very much preferred showing off his strength by scribbling with all his might all over the slate until he had made it quite white.

He thought he was learning though, for all that, and perhaps he was learning to get a certain mastery over his pencil.

Very serious and earnest he was, too, in doing whatever he set his mind upon, though at present he

seemed perfectly convinced that such things as books and slates, to say nothing of copy-books, were beyond his tender years.

Johnny was never 'a bigger man 'nuff' when such things were proposed; and May soon forbore to produce them, though she would sometimes say:—

'Ah! Johnny; you'll be a dunce, you know. You're not learning to be a big man one bit.'

'Yes; me is,' he would answer complacently. 'Me learn to dig, me learn to build big house.'

That was because he had some pieces of wood and tile and brick in the garden, with which he used

to construct various sorts of edifices.

May did not know what to do. She had the care of her dear Johnny nearly every day in the week and all day long, and she thought him the cleverest boy in the world ; so that she felt quite sure that if he would only try it would give him no trouble, and that he would soon do all sorts of things as well as any prince.

And yet there were other boys, and girls, too, children whom she knew herself, and whom she did not think half so clever as Johnny, who could read a little and write a little, and count the coloured balls in the

frame at school. Why could not Johnny be sensible and show himself off!

She was thinking so one day when it came into her head to try something else. The little fellow could at least learn to count his own fingers.

It was a happy thought; for he happened to be in a very steady mood that day, and ready to do whatever his young nurse wished to make him do.

So she took him out of the back door, that led into the yard and garden beyond, and seated herself very gravely on the step, first calling her little pupil to come and learn

something that she was going to teach him.

‘You must think you are in school,’ she said : ‘and fancy that I am the governess ; and now look here.’

‘But ’ou not governess ; ’ou May May,’ returned the matter-of-fact little pupil.

‘Never mind ; we are going to make believe ; we are going to pretend, you know, Johnny ; and that will be great fun.’

‘’Es, ’es ; that be fun,’ said Johnny, pricking up his ears and wondering what was coming next.

‘Now, Johnny,’ May went on very gravely, ‘you look here, I’ve

got ever so many fingers on this hand, and ever so many on that one. And you've got two hands as well as me, and lots of fingers on each.'

'Yes, me have; me got two hands and such lots of fingers,' replied Johnny.

'And now we want to see *how* many,' continued May. 'Look, now, I'm going to count. One, two, three, four, five. Five fingers on this hand, and—'

'No, no, May May; dat one is a *fum*: Johnny knows it is,' interposed the little man.

'Yes; I know it's a thumb,' said May; 'but a thumb is a finger, you know.'

‘No, no,’ said the little pupil.
‘A fum not a finger at all.’

‘Well, you ask mother,’ said his sister, somewhat discomposed at the way in which he always wanted to decide points now, instead of believing everything she told him, as he used to do when he was a smaller boy. ‘At any rate, we can count them : one, two, three, four, five.’

‘No, no ; me not say five, dat one not a finger, dat one a *fum* ; me not count him,’ he objected again.

‘You needn’t call it a finger ; call it a thing, if you like,’ May said, feeling very vexed. ‘We’ll say that I’ve got five things on this hand ;



"No, no, May. Dat one is a fumb. Johnny knows it is."

now let us count the other ; and then we'll do yours.'

So appeased, the fractious little pupil condescended to repeat after his sister ; only, every time he came to the thumb, he always said, ' Five is a fum ; he not a finger at all.'

Before the lesson was finished, however, both the children heard their father come into the kitchen, and, looking up, May saw him standing over her.

This was just what she wanted—it was some one to appeal to. She was getting rather out of heart at Johnny's positive little ways, and beginning to think that if he would not believe anything she said, she

could not teach him anything. So the matter was soon laid before the great judge. Both May and Johnny quite believed that father knew everything ; but it was rather amusing to see how the young gentleman tried to shirk the question, turning the subject off in all sorts of ways, and trying to play all kinds of pranks, by way of enticing his father into a good game.

Happily, however, that father was a very sensible man, who had long noticed his little daughter's devotion to her small brother, and had seen of late how that same brother was beginning to show some little airs, which he did not at all approve. So

when May said, 'Father, Johnny will have it that a thumb can't be a finger, too,' he opened his eyes very wide ; and, stroking and feeling his little son from top to toe, he said, 'What's this ? What's this creature ?'

'Me is Johnny,' answered the little fellow, laughing.

'And is me a girl?' asked the good father, making a funny face.

'No ; me is a boy,' returned the little lad stoutly.

'Me is a boy, and me is Johnny, then,' said the father. 'Me has got two names ; and so has this thing, too,' playing with one of the fat little thumbs. 'This thing is a

finger, and this thing is a thumb, too; who ever said it wasn't?'

'Johnny said it wasn't a finger,' said May; 'and he wouldn't believe me.'

'Ha, ha, ha! a wise little man he must be to think he knows better than this tall May May of mine!' and he made the two children stand side by side, that Johnny might feel how short he was, compared with his sister May, saying over and over again, 'A very wise little man to be sure! Why, I suppose he knows better than father, too!'

'Don't 'augh,' said Johnny, getting very red; 'me not 'ike it.'

'We can't help it if you grow so

clever,' returned the father. 'Why, there'll be nobody wise enough to teach you soon. May May, I wouldn't try any more if I were you. I'd let him see how he can get on without you.'

On this, two big tears came into Johnny's eyes; and he half sobbed, 'Me can't tie me pinny, me own self; me can't wash me face.'

'Oh, well, that can't be helped. They must go untied and unwashed,' said his father. 'May can't be teased with conceited little boys, who won't believe anything she says. Go away, May, and let him alone.'

On this, May looked half inclined to cry, too, for she would rather have

borne anything than give up her Johnny ; and the little lad looked as if he would have rushed into her arms if his father had not been holding him.

And he did contrive, at last, to slip out of that strong grasp, and to get to May's side, and hold up his mouth for a kiss.

CHAPTER VI.

JOHNNY LISTENS TO MR. DON'T LIKE.

AFTER this, May thought it wiser not to say anything about learning of any kind whatever for some days. A week, I think it was, at least, before she said another word on the subject, and that was an immense time, you know, for people of the ages of May and Johnny. Indeed, for Johnny, it was quite long enough to blot out of his mind all disagreeable thoughts about his own

little airs and graces, and the promises that he had whispered to his sister never to be obstinate again any more.

I do not mean to say that he could not have been made to remember how his father laughed at him, and how vexed and foolish he had felt; only as long as he was good and tractable, neither May nor any one else tried to make him think of these things, and you may be quite sure that Johnny would not try himself.

He was growing a very stout, sturdy boy, and quite as restless as most boys—never still a moment when he was awake, and always in mischief if he was not looked after.

So May had enough to do with her young charge; and a patient little woman she was.

But then she had a secret notion that she understood this Johnny of hers better than any one else in the world—yes, better even than mother or father!

That might be a mistake, of course; very likely it was; for no doubt when they were strict or sharp with him it was because they knew that boys want rather a tight hand over them, and had no intention that Johnny should get to be a little Turk by having his own way too much.

They had seen other boys, you see,

and knew how easily they could be spoilt ; while May had never really known any other than this little pet-brother. And, being with him all day long, she quite understood how hard it was for his little legs and arms to keep still even for a minute, and how often he made a great noise, or upset somebody's arrangements, without in the least knowing what he was doing or meaning any harm.

Besides, he loved her so very much, and wanted her for so many things ; and that was very pleasant—it always is, to have people love us, and to know that they can't get on without us.

It was because she wanted to have him quite in a good temper, and to make quite a new start about learning, that she never said one word about it all that week.

And all the time, you see, he was growing and becoming a bigger boy. May took care that he should not forget that; for every time she put him to bed, or got him up in the morning, she would say, 'Oh, Johnny, Johnny! how you do grow!' or, 'How heavy you do get; I shan't be able to lift you at all soon.'

And another thing the little maiden did that was very cunning and clever.

There was a very tall, big man

who used to go by their door every day—a head taller, at least, this man was than May and Johnny's father. Well, this man could not read, and he could not write; in fact there were very few things that he could do; so he was nearly always out of work, and often very hungry, because no masters wanted a workman who could not do anything!

So May used often to say, 'There goes poor Sammy. Oh! I'm so glad he isn't my father. What a dreadful thing it must be to grow up to be a man before you're ready to be one! Only think! to keep on growing and growing, and yet never learning anything all the while! I should feel so

frightened if I was like that. I wonder how it was. Perhaps Sammy hadn't got a good father and mother to teach him and make him learn. Or perhaps he was naughty and wouldn't learn anything.

'They say you can't learn half so well when you're grown up, and that often you don't care to do anything if you haven't been made while you were young.'

Oh! May, you know that this Johnny brother of yours had plenty of thoughts in his little head, and when you washed his face you could tell pretty well that now he was putting a good many things together.

And so he was; and though she

never once said, 'Take care, Johnny, that *you* don't grow up a great, useless dunce like that,' yet by degrees the little laddie was taken with a great fear lest he should.

So more than ever did he go on trying his hand on all sorts of things, and puzzling his young brain how this was made, and how that was done, by no means always to the amusement of his elders—because, like other little boys, he often found it easier to get things to pieces than to put them together again; and made all sorts of litters about the house or in the garden, and all, too, without doing himself much good.

It would have been a good deal

wiser, you see, if he had just set to work to learn the things that little boys should learn, and many of which May could have taught him so very well.

But wise heads are not often found on young shoulders; and a great deal of this was that good-for-nothing Mr. Don't Like's doing, whom, in the end, poor Johnny so often found it necessary to send about his business.

He was getting a bigger boy every day, as I said, but still when he saw that spelling-book lying on the shelf, and something inside him whispered, 'Hadn't you better begin to learn those letters that May May wanted

to teach you so long ago ?' he only gave his shoulders an impatient little shake, and said to himself, 'Johnny's not a bigger boy 'nuff yet ; no he isn't.'

May used to hear him saying this over and over again as if he wanted to make himself feel that it was quite true ; and sometimes she very nearly got out : ' A *big* boy enough, you mean, Johnny,' but she always stopped short, because she thought that while he kept repeating this he would not really try even if he agreed to begin.

So she waited and waited still ; for she said to herself : ' I could not do as mother would if she meant to

make him learn. I can't say, "Now, Johnny, you are quite old enough, and I'm going to teach you to read. So you must be a good boy and try how fast you can learn." Mother would, I think, if she had time ; for I don't believe I was one scrap bigger when she made me learn ; but I'm not his mother, only his sister, so I must manage another way.'

So May and Johnny went on for a whole week. Oh, what a long one it did seem ! There was a secret now between them, though they did not think of it ; but, you'll see, they could not keep it long.

It was beginning to burn inside each of them ; and, I dare say, you

know how uncomfortable it is when secrets take to doing that.

Johnny found his particularly disagreeable, because every time he looked in the glass he seemed to get taller ; and sometimes he began to be quite afraid that he might wake up some morning and find himself a great tall man, like the one who went by the window so often. And then he thought of a certain little girl, who also went past every day—a tiny child she was, who went toddling along by her elder sister's side—and not so tall as himself, Johnny was nearly sure, though he was afraid to ask her to stand by him and measure ; and yet *she* carried a little

book, and a little slate in her bag ; and Johnny knew that she went to school and learnt her lessons there.

Then he was a boy ; and May had often told him that boys ought to be more clever than girls. So when he saw her, he couldn't help going on thinking, ' If Fan is big 'nuff, Johnny must be.'

Only he didn't like that thought. He was very cross with it for coming into his head at all ; and he tried to push it back, and choke it, and make it go away altogether.

But it was of no use trying. It would come back ; for, you see, Johnny's mother had often told him that good little children always liked

to learn what was good for them, or if they didn't *like* it they learnt all the same, that they might grow up to be wise men and women ; and that it was only the naughty, lazy ones who would not try to learn as soon as they were big enough.

And Johnny knew very well that the great God up in Heaven could see quite well when he was trying to be a very good boy, and that he knew, too, when he made excuses.

So that was how it was, that Mr. Ought began to talk again very fast, and very loud inside this Johnny's little heart. And soon he and Mr. Don't Like began to have such a hot wrangle together that

Master Johnny's face did not look so happy and comfortable as usual.

Nobody, except himself, could hear what either of those two gentlemen said, you must know ; but very soon they made him talk, too.

May was sitting just then on a great box ; and she had the old spelling-book in her hand, and was wishing very much for the pleasure of teaching her brother all those big letters.

She could read herself quite easily ; and it was so nice to read stories. She thought that Johnny would like it so much if he would only learn.

And while she was thinking so,

up to her side came the little man, saying :—

‘What ’ou doing, May May?’

‘Reading a story to myself, Johnny. Such a nice one!’ answered his sister.

‘Me tink me learn,’ said Master Johnny. ‘Me a bigger boy, now.’

‘Very well,’ said May, feeling quite pleased. ‘Come here, then, and sit by me; and I’ll teach you the big letters. You’ll soon learn.’

So Johnny went close to May, and began to pore over the book, asking, ‘What dis about? And is dis a nice story?’

‘Yes, yes,’ said May, ‘very nice; but that’s not the way to learn,

Johnny. You must say the letters first, and then get to 'little words, and then to big ones. Come, look here ; this is great A, and this next is bouncing B, and—'

'Great A !' said Johnny. 'I don't think he's very great. He's a great deal littler than I am.'

Then he tried to turn over the leaf to see what was on the other side.

'Oh ! but you must look,' said May : 'you must look at it well ; or else you won't know it again.'

So Johnny gave one more look, and then he patted May's cheek and kissed her ; saying in a coaxing sort of way, that he had when he was lazy :—

‘Me won’t say A, B, C, May ; me read a story.’

‘Read a story ! how can you, Johnny, before you know your letters ? Come, now, be a steady boy, and look at them.’

‘Oh ! me don’t like them. They very stupid letters, me sure,’ said her little pupil, jumping about and playing all sorts of antics. ‘Teach Johnny a story, May.’

‘I’ll *read* you one afterwards, if you’ll say the letters nicely,’ May answered, eagerly catching at this suggestion.

But Johnny was not in a learning mood at all ; and he would do nothing but caper about and turn



"Me won't say A, B, C, May. Me read a story."

everything into play, until it was tea-time. So that lesson came to nothing, you see.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LITTLE LADDIE GROWS WISER.



SMALL people have to fight greater battles sometimes than big people think; and when those battles are *inside* the little people and nobody can take either side of the fight or help at all, very few great big men and women guess how hard these battles are. Indeed, very few people know that anything is going on at all, except that they think the children are cross.

Even May, though she watched him so closely, had only a shrewd guess or two about Johnny that evening. She did not know half his troubles.

Only she had noticed that when that little lad was very eager and frisky, and rather cross, too, between whiles, it was 'because he had got something in his head,' to use her own expression.

My idea is that if we could have looked inside him we should have found more the matter with his heart than his head, but very likely the little boy or girl who gets this book may not even know where that part of our bodies lies.

And that does not matter one bit;

indeed, while they are quite small, perhaps they had better not know.

But this much all little folks can understand. They all know the difference between a little boy who loves his mother and father and sister and brother very much indeed, and a little boy who only seems to care about himself.

And they all know the difference between a little boy who dearly loves a good game of romps, and who laughs and shouts and gets merry over it, and another who goes creeping about like a little mouse, and does not care for anything, or cares only a very little.

We say of those loving, eager

children that they have plenty of heart, or that they are very warm-hearted. I like that sort; don't you? and I don't care much for the cold, stony young people.

But, you see, it is the heart that makes all the difference. It is there where our lovings and likings live. And that is what I meant about Johnny. He had lots of lovings and likings; and lots of dislikings, too. And sometimes if we could have seen inside that little heart of his, we should have seen quite a bustle, and a scuffle, and a storm in there.

That was because Johnny, small boy as he was, knew very well that these likings and dislikings were not

always good friends of his. He had found out that sometimes they almost told stories, and that very often they got him into trouble. And that was why, sometimes, our small friend did not like to tell what they said, no not even to his patient sister May.

When he was a tiny baby he did not mind, but told everything, and cried or laughed just as he felt disposed.

That was before he knew anything of that curious person, Mr. Ought, who so often changed his name to Oughtn't, you know.

He was a good person, Johnny knew; and he had a great respect for him; though, for all that, sometimes he wished he would hold his tongue

and not keep saying, 'Don't,' or 'Do' so very loud.

I have a great notion that he talked inside him a good deal on that evening after he had been so silly about learning his letters; and that while he was at tea he said to him several times :

' Ah, you silly boy, you ! you don't feel half so comfortable now as you would have done if you had just been wise and tried to learn some of those big letters. How nice it would have been to think that you really knew a little bit of reading, instead of having to remember that you behaved like a baby rather than like such a big boy as you are. You'll have to go to school soon, and then what a dunce you will

look! And it will be all your own fault, because you wouldn't learn when May tried to teach you. Poor May, too! Dear May, just look at her face and see how vexed she is! Oh! you are a naughty boy to serve her so; you know you are, and you don't deserve such a kind sister.'

So Mr. Ought talked away inside Johnny's heart; and he was obliged to listen to him though he did not want to at all.

He kept eating his bread and butter all the while; but he said it was not nice, and wanted to leave it. Only mother said he was dainty, and that she could not have waste. At last, when Mr. Ought came to that

bit about May, Johnny could not help taking a peep at her face, though the great tears that would come into his eyes would not let him see her plainly.

May saw them; but she did not know a bit what made them come. She thought it was all about the bread and butter, and because he had got more than he wanted. And so she said :—

‘ I’ll eat some of yours, Johnny, if you don’t want it all. Give me what you can’t eat.’

That was very kind; was it not? And May was surprised to find that, after all, Johnny gave her a very little piece, and said he could eat all the rest.

After tea, the father said they would have a walk in the fields, and that Johnny might go, too, if he was a good boy. That was most delightful!

A walk with father came so seldom, because he did not often get home from work soon enough; but when it did come, the children knew that it meant a game of play, too, and a good one; for father was a famous hand at games.

And this was a splendid evening; and mother was so glad to go out, too; and she told Johnny that, if he liked, he might go and ask for his white pussy, that was to be, and that they would put it in a basket and

carry it with them, because it would like a game in the hay.

So the little laddie forgot all his troubles, and was as happy as a king, with his dear father and mother, and May May, and the pussy; and it seemed time to come home and go to bed a long while before he was ready.

Mother put him to bed that night. She always did when she could get home from work in time; and then she gave him a good bath, and lots of kisses; because she loved her little Johnny very much.

And though he did not tell her quite all the secrets that he told to May, yet he used to ask her lots of

questions, and some that he thought May May could not answer.

That evening he was very full of talk, and chattered away as fast as his little tongue could go, about his dear white pussy and the ‘*bouful*’ daisy-chain, that May had made and put round its neck; and about the hay, and how nice it smelt; and what fun it was to see father hide himself quite up in it, and then come bouncing out.

And his mother told him that she thought he was a very happy little boy to have so many nice things, and that he ought to try to be very good. And then she talked to him about God, his great Father

up in Heaven, and how it was He who made all those things so nice and pretty, that Johnny, and other little boys and girls, might have so much pleasure.

She told him how God could always see him, and how He watched over him, and took care of him, even when father and mother were obliged to be out; and how He knew everything that he thought about. And Johnny listened; but he did not say much, only he looked rather uncomfortable when mother said that God knew even what he thought about.

That was because he had so many naughty thoughts, you know. Of course, he would not have minded if

they had been all good ones. And I do not suppose there is any little boy or girl who likes to think that all the things that he or she thinks about are known by any one.

Besides, Johnny knew that God is quite good ; and so, of course, he knew that He could not like some of his own naughty, cross thoughts.

So he began to leave off talking, and became very quiet. His mother supposed that he was getting sleepy ; but it was not that. He was thinking about things that he did not like to tell her, and making up his mind what he would do to-morrow.

And so he said his little prayers,

and gave mammy his good-night kiss ; and then she went away.

Well, Johnny did not lie awake very long, though it seemed a great while to him : but before he went to sleep he made up his mind about something.

I need not tell you what that was ; for you will soon see.

He did not sleep very late next morning ; for, when he had been asleep about eleven hours, all his tired feelings were gone ; so, of course, he could not help waking.

He was not by himself when he opened his eyes ; for though mother had been obliged to go out, yet there stood his dear May May waiting as

quietly as a mouse until he opened his eyes.

He had a good splash first of all, for he always got into a great tub and put head and all under water that he might come out a nice clean boy.

And then he rubbed with one towel, and May with another until he was quite warm and dry.

After that he got his clothes on, and May brushed his hair and taught him his little hymn and prayers which he could not yet say quite by himself. Then they went down and had their bread and milk, and Johnny was very funny over it that morning : for he kept eating very fast for a minute or two and then looking up at May and

saying ‘Me tell ’ou something when me’s done.’

May did not think much of that. She only laughed and said: ‘Well, make haste.’

But no sooner had Johnny finished than he set to work hunting for something; and when he had found it he brought it to May; and it turned out to be—what do you think? Why, that famous old spelling-book that he was so silly over last evening.

He took it to May and laid it on her lap; and she soon found out the truth; the little man is sensible at last, and consents to learn A for Ass.

‘Me be a good boy to-day, May,’ he said. ‘Me won’t play; me going

to learn *wearlly* and *tooly* if 'ou'll teach Johnny.'

'Will you *really*?' said May, looking as if she did not know how to trust him.

'Yes, *wearlly* and *tooly*,' repeated the little lad in the most emphatic way he could.

Really and truly, I must tell you, were very favourite words of his; but he was not contented with repeating them over and over now, but added very vehemently, 'Me will, May.'

He did, too, truly enough; Mr. Ought had quite conquered again, you see, though it was after a hard battle with Mr. Don't Like; and Johnny was a quiet, happy little man




The little man is sensible at last, and consents to learn A for Ass.

again; while May said to herself that she had been quite right in thinking that he had something in his head.

CHAPTER VIII.

A TIRED BOY.

TILL, you know, with the best will in the world, every one must get tired in time; and say what you like, Miss May, it is a very long job to learn all those twenty-six great letters, though when they are learnt they do seem easy enough.

There was a lady once who had a number of boys and girls, whom she brought up to mind every word she

said, and to be very good children. They do say that somehow or other she got them all, except one, to learn every one of their letters on one day, so that there should be no more trouble with them.

Well, it was a good job over certainly; but I think they must have been very clever little children; at least, I am sure that *I* couldn't have learnt all the letters in one day, and I don't believe I could now, though I've been grown up a long, long time. It took Johnny's sister longer, too; but then she had known them all a long while now, and had learnt a great many other things since. So little May forgot how hard it was at

the time to learn them, and Johnny was quite tired before he got to X.

He had said them all very patiently right through down to that letter, and twice over each letter as May pointed; for he had made up his mind to be a very wise boy. Still, when he got to that one, which is the last but two, you know, he could not help giving a great yawn and saying: 'That's enough, May. Me tired. Do it again morrow-day.'

And I am sure that if May had been a big woman instead of a little girl, she would have quite understood *how* tired he was, and put the book away for that day.

But you see she was not a grown up



May forgets how hard the letters were to learn ; and Johnny gets quite tired before he gets to X.

woman; and she could not help that. She was not a bit tired herself; and she thought they were getting on so beautifully that she did not want to stop.

So she was quite disappointed, and tried to persuade him to go on, saying:—

‘Oh! go on, Johnny, why, we haven’t half done yet! I wanted you to say them all over again and see how many you knew before we put the book away.’

But Johnny’s patience was quite exhausted; and he had made up his mind to stop. So it was of no use talking; for he was a positive little gentleman, as we know now; don’t

we? And when he had made up his mind to anything it was not easy to turn him.

‘All over again,’ he repeated, with a look of despair. ‘Oh! May, me couldn’t; me done plenty. Morrow, May; me say them ’gain morrow-day.’

So the book went back to its place; and Johnny’s bricks came out instead, and his ball; and he had a splendid game by himself, while his sister washed the basins that had held their bread and milk and put them away in the cupboard, and made their little beds, and dusted the room, and swept up the kitchen hearth.

There was a nice lot of work for

a little girl like May ! I wonder how many girls can make themselves as useful !

And when morrow-day came, I am glad to tell you that she had thought of a much better way of teaching Johnny his letters than that of making him say them straight through.

And this was it.

First, she opened the book in the right place ; and Johnny came with his very steadiest face on, to stand beside her. They could not do anything without that, of course. And Johnny said :—

‘ Now, me going to say A’s.’

‘ Yes ; so we are ; and I think it

will be good fun to see how many A's we can find, Johnny,' said his anxious young teacher. 'Look, this is what A is like—one stroke goes this way, and another goes that; and there is a bar between; and two straight marks at the bottom for feet. Now, you look and see if you can find any more letters like that; and I'll look, too: and we'll see who'll find the most. Make haste!'

'Yes; me look. Here's one,' said Johnny, quite excited.

And May cried, 'Here's another, and here's another. That's two I've found.'

And Johnny looked again, and

chuckled, and said, 'Here's another A, May, and here's another ;' until at last they were tired of looking for that letter any more. So then May taught him bouncing B; and they hunted for that in the same way, and then for C's. Afterwards, she went back again, to make sure that Johnny had not forgotten the two first; and then they stopped.

For May had been thinking that she must get Johnny to like his lesson, and not tire of it, or else he would soon say again that he couldn't learn, and declare that he wasn't a 'bigger boy 'nuff,' as he did before.

But after the lesson was done, I

must tell you that May did not forget to read her little pupil a story.

For Johnny loved stories with all his heart; and when there was a chance of one, he would get his little three-legged stool that father made for him a long time ago, and sit down on it, very often resting his fat cheeks on his fat hands, and looking very earnestly into the reader's face. Because, you know, May was not the only person to read stories. There was the father—he would read some good ones, and make Johnny laugh by the funny way in which he read them; and mother, too: sometimes she related stories without a book—told about

things that happened when she was a child, you know ;—and then there was the old grandfather, who tumbled down and hurt his knee ; he knew lots.

And so, one way or another, Johnny came in for a good many stories.

But now for May's. It was out of that spelling-book ; and this is what it was :—

‘ A little girl was walking one day in a nice garden that belonged to her papa. It was early in the morning ; and she had come out before breakfast, because her papa had told her that she might go and see whether there were any strawberries that were ripe.

‘The little girl had to pass by a low wall covered with pretty creepers, and on the other side of the wall there were thick bushy trees, the boughs of which hung over, so that she could take hold of them.

‘Besides this, there was one tree that grew on her side of the fence; and just as she passed by that, something ran behind the trunk between it and the wall. It ran very quickly, and she could not see what it was; but while she was looking about, she heard a little quick cry in a tree near—one of those whose boughs came over the wall. It sounded almost like the cry of a child; but there was no child to be seen up there.

‘The little girl looked about in all directions to make out where the cry came from; and soon, peeping up into the thick branches, she spied something that looked like a nest; and sitting on it was the bird that made that cry. It went on making it still, opening its beak very wide, and looking so frightened and unhappy, that she was sure something was the matter.

‘What could it be? The bird, which, she was sure, was the father or mother one, was looking down on the ground, as if there was something terrible to be seen there; and yet it did not leave the nest and fly away.

‘So the little girl looked down, too; and soon she saw something moving again behind the tree. At first, she thought that it looked like a cat; but soon she saw that it was not so big, that it had a pointed head. Then she knew that this creature was a weasel; and she remembered that weasels eat birds’ eggs and young birds. What could she do? She did not wonder now at the poor parent bird’s distress; for she knew that if she went away the dreadful weasel would get its poor little ones.

‘Fortunately, at that very moment, good-natured Thomas, the gardener, came out of a hot-house near, and

was just going to see after his bees, when he caught sight of his master's child, and saw that something troubled her. She did not speak; but beckoned him to come to her. And when he came, she soon made him understand her trouble, and the trouble of the poor bird.

‘ The weasel was still hiding behind the trunk of the tree; and he said he could easily poke it out and make it go away. But then it would be sure to come back, because it had discovered this nest so conveniently low down in the branches.

‘ “ I’ll tell you what I’ll do, miss,” said Thomas. “ If you’ll bide here, I’ll go and get my gun, and see if I

can't shoot the creature. You ain't afeard, are you?"

'Oh, no; little missy was not afraid. She had heard Thomas's gun many a time, and longed to have the little birds saved.

'So he very quickly fetched it; but the first time he fired he only hit the tree, and frightened the weasel into a hole.

"That's good," he said. "Now I have you, Master Weasel;" and he put his gun close to the hole, and fired again.


'And then he bade the little girl look over the wall and see how the birds were getting on; for he knew that, though she wanted to save

them, yet she would be very sorry if she saw the dead weasel.

‘ And while she looked up at the nest, he made the hole bigger with his spade, and pulled the enemy of the little birdies out; and when he saw that it was quite dead, he hid it out of sight; and told the child that she could go and get her strawberries now, for that her young pets were perfectly safe, and that there was no longer a cruel weasel to hurt them.’

CHAPTER IX.

A GREAT FRIGHT.

 OHNNY had a great many new thoughts in his head after he had heard that story about the weasel; and it was one of the nice things about this little laddie, that he had always plenty of thoughts of his own; he was not like some boys and girls whom I have seen, whose heads seem no better than pieces of wood, without any ideas of their own at all.

Such children as those are not at all amusing ; and it is dry work teaching them, taking care of them, or playing with them ; for, you see, they really are not much better than wooden dolls. May would not have been so fond of Johnny if he had been a boy of that kind.

But he was not a bit.

I think he was a very happy little man, though, of course, he had his troubles like all the rest of us. Indeed, perhaps, he was more sorry about many things than some of those wooden-headed young people might be, just as he was more glad about others.

One thing is certain. This little

Johnny was all alive; and he was very seldom still, and never idle. From the time he got up till he went to bed again, he was always busy about something in his way.

Now, I do not say that it was altogether pleasant, either to May or any one else, to have so much noise and bustle about the house, and to have so many things put out of order to suit some game of Johnny's. His mother sometimes used to say,

‘Ah, Johnny, now, if you had only been a girl, I shouldn't have had half the trouble to keep you clean and quiet!’

And often she was glad to turn him out in front of the house to

play there; for, she said, he could make as much noise and as much mess there as he liked.

And out of doors he had lots of friends, so that he was not at all unhappy about that.

I might tell you about a good many small boys and girls who used to come and play with him, and about the grottoes they made with oyster-shells, and the pies they constructed out of mud, and the games they had at horses, and at ball; and lots of other things that they did.

Some, you know, would play with all their hearts, and do everything well, and be favourites with all the others; but some were not well, or

they were dull and stupid. Nobody cared whether they played or not. It seemed to make very little difference.

Johnny, however, was always wanted; but just now it was only those children who had had the whooping-cough, who were allowed to play with him. The mothers of the others were afraid lest their children should get it; and so they kept them away.

And thus it happened that sometimes when there was going to be a great scrubbing of the floor, or a great wash of the clothes, and Master Johnny was so very active, that he had to be turned outside to play,

there were no little companions there to romp with him.

And then what do you suppose the little man did with himself?

‘Oh! he’ll amuse himself,’ his mother said one day to a neighbour who was helping her, ‘never fear. Only, May, you must give him a look, now and then, to see that he isn’t in mischief.’

And so he did. The mother was quite right. Johnny had his white pussy now. It lived in the house with him, and had a nice little basket to sleep in, with straw in it to keep it warm. He had only to call, and pussy would come directly for a game.

And then there was Wolf, his old friend Wolf, whom he loved so dearly, and who loved him better than anything else in the world. Johnny and Wolf could be happy by the hour together, talking to each other, each in his own way, which the other understood quite well, though they did not talk the same language.

The only thing was, that now and then, Wolf had some other work to do, besides attending to his young master; for, being a very sensible dog, he was sometimes sent with messages. He could carry the money in a little basket to buy a loaf at the baker's, and bring back the

bread quite safely ; and he knew, too, where his big master was working, and could take a note to him, quite as well as May could. Indeed, once when May was not quite well, the faithful dog managed to carry his master's dinner, never touching a bit of it, though he could smell the meat, and knew there was a bone with it—and Wolf had a very particular fancy for bones.

So, you see, Johnny could not have Wolf to play when he had other work in hand.

And he was always sorry when he could not, because he was such a capital companion, and there was no end of the fun they had together.

But Johnny liked a great many sorts of animals, and of birds, too. He thought a great deal about birds after that story that May read to him, and made a great many plans about defending the little ones against their enemies, the weasels, and against those great cats that he well knew were always on the lookout for the dear little birds, or for their mothers either.

Indeed, when he was a great man, he purposed to do something really noble for the defence of these helpless creatures.

But we were talking about dogs, and Johnny's fancy for them all. He had not yet met with an unkind

one, though he knew a good many ; and most of them would play with him whenever he invited them.

Those were the dogs belonging to the neighbours ; his little friends' dogs, you see.

One day, however, it was a hot day in summer ; mother was busy indoors, and May weeding in the garden, while Johnny had run out into the lane close by.

May had been watching him ; and she had been talking to him not a minute before. He was out of her sight before she knew it, for he had run into the lane because he thought he saw his dear friend Wolf coming

back from an errand on which he had been sent.

It was not Wolf though, but another big dog something like him, only he had not such a good-natured face. But Johnny did not notice that. He had an idea that all dogs were kind like his old friend, and as fond of a game.

That was why he ran on after he had found out his mistake, and went a little way after the stranger, calling out :—

‘Doggie, doggie, stop, doggie.’

But, unfortunately, this was not a kind dog at all, that was going by. And he could not understand being stopped like that. Perhaps he was

just going home to dinner, you see ; and it might be that he was not used to children, and did not like them.

At any rate, he only turned round and growled in a very surly, disagreeable way, instead of coming forward politely, as a well-bred dog would do, to meet the little boy.

Johnny, however, did not wait to see how he met him. He rushed forward, and, standing in front of the surly animal, began to talk to him, and to try to pat his back.

‘That isn’t to be borne at all,’ thinks Mr. Stranger Doggie. ‘I wonder who this upstart of a boy can be.’ And he growled again.

‘Don’t be f’rightened; don’t run away. Johnny won’t hurt ’ou,’ said our little friend, putting out his hand once more. But, indeed, he had no thought of being frightened. It was angry and insulted that the stranger felt. And, instead of letting him pat him, he gave such a snarl and such a snap, that Johnny could not make it out at all, and thought he had better make the best of his way home.

Mr. Dog, however, did not intend now to allow him to do that in peace. He had been a great deal too much offended. So, as soon as Johnny began to run, he ran too, and the next minute our poor little



Poor Johnny screams for May, May.

friend felt himself seized behind by his pinafore.

Oh, dear, dear, he has never had such a fright before ! Poor Johnny screams for May May, though he really believes he shall be eaten up before she can come.

CHAPTER X.

MAY COMES TO THE RESCUE.

FORTUNATELY, May was not far off. She had just that minute missed her pet, and wondered where he could have gone.

So she ran down to the bottom of the garden directly she heard his cry ; and you may guess what she felt when she saw him struggling with this great, strange dog.

Now, some little girls would have been too frightened to do anything



Fortunately May wasn't far off.

in such a case ; or perhaps they would have set up a loud scream for somebody else to come.

May did scream, certainly ; but she did something else, too ; for she took up a great stone that lay in the road, and, as soon as she was near enough to take care that she did not hit Johnny, she threw it with all her strength at his enemy's back.

Then the great rough dog let go his hold ; and setting up a loud howl, he ran off as fast as his legs would carry him.

You see, cross, cruel creatures, whether they be men or beasts, are often great cowards.

It was a good thing for Johnny

that this dog was such a coward, though, or he might have been bitten in a shocking way. As it was, he tore a great hole in poor Johnny's pinafore.

However, they did not think much of that—either the little boy or his sister; they were so glad to see the horrid dog go away. Only Johnny clung to May, while she made as much noise as she could to frighten his dreadful foe still more, and prevent his coming back again; and when the danger was all over, he began to cry and sob, and to hold his sister tighter and tighter.

‘Never mind, Johnny,’ she said, ‘never mind; he’s gone now. You

must keep out of the way of strange dogs. Let's go in to mother and tell her all about it.'

Of course, Johnny was very glad to go, although it did come into his head that very likely she would say that he ought not to have gone so far away. Still, he thought that even if she did scold a little, yet his own mammy would make him well sooner than anybody else; and so they went into the house together, and told her all about it.

'What! did he bite you, Johnny?' the good mother asked, as soon as she heard what was the matter; and she looked quite frightened until she had examined her little boy all over,

from top to toe, to see if she could find any marks of the horrid beast's great teeth on him.

‘Me don’t know,’ sobbed the child : ‘me *fink* he did.’

‘No ; it’s only the pinafore,’ said his mother : ‘and that’s not of much consequence. We can soon mend that. It’s a very good thing that he didn’t make a hole in you instead. You mustn’t be running after dogs that you don’t know anything about. Or did he run at you first ? Which was it, my little man ?’

‘Me *fought* it was Wolf at first,’ sobbed Johnny, ‘and then me didn’t know he’d bite.’

‘We shall have to tell our good

Wolf all about it, and get him to keep his cousins in better order,' returned his mother, giving her little boy a very comforting hug, and a great many kisses. 'Wolf must serve him out for touching his young master, if ever he meets him.'

'Me tell Wolf,' replied Johnny, with boyish glee at the prospect of a fight between the two dogs; 'but me don't b'lieve he'll come again. He's so f'ightened!'

'That's because he knows he's done wrong,' answered his mother. 'Bad dogs are often cowards, just as bad boys are. I hope my little boy will never do anything that will

make him afraid to meet either his friends or his foes.'

'What are foes?' Johnny asked, opening his eyes very wide.

'People who hate you, Johnny,' answered May, eager to show that she knew that.

'Does anybody hate Johnny?' asked the little laddie, looking quite concerned.

'No, nobody, I'm sure,' his mother said, catching him up for another hug.

'But you know, Johnny,' added May, 'somebody *may*, some day, if you do anything that they don't like.'

'Well, we won't think of that,' said the mother, seeing her little boy's

lip quiver again. ‘Johnny must be very kind to everybody, and then everybody will love him.’

That cleared away the choky feeling, and the little boy slipped off his mother’s lap, and trotted off with his sister to have a game in the garden.

But it was not very long before he got into another sad piece of trouble, that I must tell you about; and it was a worse trouble, much, to my mind, than this with the strange dog.

It would be a good thing if one never had to tell such stories, as I must now relate, about any little boys; but then, if they happen, we must tell them, or else people would

only half understand what they are like.

Now get ready for a very sad story. Johnny had, as you know, what is called a very sweet tooth; in other words, he was very fond of what I daresay you call, as he did, by the name of *goodies*.

And his father, who liked to please his little man, pretty often brought him home a pennyworth or so on a Saturday night, when he came home from work; while his kind mother would sometimes, when he had been very good, give him a taste out of the sugar-basin.

When grandmother came over she sometimes brought a little lump sugar

with her for a present to mother, and then, if Johnny got a white lump, he was happy indeed, and thought it as good as any 'sweeties' out of the shop.

But his mother did not like him to tease for such things ; and so, if she forgot to give him a lump, he did not much like to ask for one.

Now it so happened that, a week after this scuffle with the dog, Johnny's grandmother did come over to see them, and did bring a pound of lump sugar with some other things in her bag.

This lump sugar was put into the best sugar-basin, and the grandmother and father and mother had

some in their tea when they all sat down together, while one lump each was given to May and Johnny to do as they liked with. And as you may be sure, they each chose to keep it to eat afterwards, being quite content with moist sugar in their milk and water.

Well, they both enjoyed the sugar very much ; but May, when she had finished hers, thought no more of it.

Not so Master Johnny. Unfortunately, as she was busy talking, the mother left that basin, with a good many lumps still in it, on the chest at the end of the room ; and thus, as he ran in and out at his play, and was every now and then

stopped for a little fun with his grandmother, he saw this tempting basin, and could not help thinking how delightful it must be to have money enough to buy all that sugar, and how, when he was a man, he would always keep his pockets filled, so that he could eat a lump whenever he felt inclined.

So he went to bed with his young head full of the thoughts of those lumps of sugar. He did not know that there was any harm in thinking about them, or any danger either; and so he lay awake a long time for him, thinking these thoughts, and wondering whether mother would give him another lump next morning.

At last he went to sleep ; and I cannot tell you what his dreams were about, or whether he had any. I know, however, that next morning while May was washing and dressing him, he asked her more than once whether she thought that all the sugar had been eaten up for supper, or whether the basin would come out again for tea that day.

May did not know ; and besides, she was getting quite tired of the subject, and did not encourage him to talk about it. However, Johnny made haste to go down, that he might just see whether the basin was still left out of the cupboard, and whether it was empty now or not.

He spied it directly, and it was not empty ; for mother had quite forgotten to put it away. Johnny only meant to look, of course ; for he knew very well that it was stealing to take a lump of sugar without leave.

If May had come down with him, she would have put it away into the cupboard at once, and locked the door ; but there were some things to put tidy upstairs ; and she waited a few minutes before she followed him. Oh, May May ! if you had only known !

So Johnny stood and gazed at the lumps of sugar. How delicious they did look to be sure ! His

mouth began to water ; and he thought if mother had only been there, he could not have helped asking for one piece.

But she was not ; and so next he began to wonder—would she mind very much—would one lump less make much difference ?

It was Mr. Like, you know, that put those thoughts into his head ; and he talked very fast and loud.

But that other little talker, who called himself Mr. Oughtn't this time, was not silent. He whispered too, loud, and then louder :—

‘No, no ; don’t touch them. You know very well that they are not yours, and that it will be stealing if

you do. And God will know if mother never finds out.'

Oh ! Johnny, you know Mr. Oughtn't is quite right ; listen to what he has got to say, and tell Mr. Like to go about his business.

Dear, dear ! Johnny does not. He lets naughty Mr. Like go on chattering ; and he listens to every word he has to say, and takes no notice of the other speaker, who had so often been a good friend to him.

Another minute, and Johnny's fingers are in the basin. Oh dear me ! who would have thought it !—the little laddie has taken one, two, three lumps, and actually put one into his mouth !

Just then May began to come downstairs ; and Johnny heard her foot on the first step. So there was no time to enjoy that lump. He had to munch it up, and swallow it as fast as he could. It was not any pleasure ; and what to do with the other two lumps he did not know.

Before May could get downstairs, too, in came somebody else, and that somebody was Johnny's mother.

Now Johnny's mother had very quick eyes. She found out in a minute when anything was the matter ; and her little boy's red cheeks and confused way of looking at her, instantly made her suspect something. Then she looked all

round the room, and the sight of that sugar-basin, which she had forgotten, told the story.

‘Come here, Johnny; come to me directly,’ she said, ‘and open your hand. Open it now,’ she repeated, seeing that he clenched his fist very tight, and got still redder in the face.

Johnny threw the lumps into his mother’s lap, and then buried his head there, too, and sobbed as if his little heart would break, crying out,

‘I so sorry! I so sorry!’

‘And so am I, Johnny,’ said his mother, gravely. ‘I never thought my little boy would *steal*.’

May was downstairs now; and

when she heard what was the matter she began to cry, too ; for *she* never thought her Johnny-boy would do anything so bad. And when Johnny had done crying himself, and could hear and see anything, he heard the sound of May May's sobs, and saw the tears in his dear mammy's eyes, which made him begin to cry again, and to feel himself the most miserable little boy in the world.

Of course, he could not have any sugar in his bread and milk that morning ; and he knew that in the evening his father must be told. What else would happen to him he could not tell ; but, you see, this was not a happy day at all : but a very

miserable one indeed. It would have been very different if he had listened to Mr. Oughtn't.

If any of the neighbours did but look at him, he shrank out of their way, thinking that they knew how bad he was. Indeed, he was ashamed to look even Wolf in the face. In fact, he was afraid of everything, and was become quite a coward, like the strange dog that he had seen in the lane.

And, of course, that evening when his father heard all about it, was the saddest that he had ever known.

The next day was Sunday; and his father and mother took him to church as usual with them. He al-

ways liked to go, though he could not understand very much that the minister said. And his mother said that at least he was learning to sit still and listen ; and that every Sunday he ought to be able to understand more than the last, because his father was teaching him at home a good many words that were said there.

His mother could not tell whether he was listening much that day ; but when they came out of church he surprised her by saying,

‘ I didn’t think he’d have done it.’

‘ Done what ? What do you mean ?’ she asked, looking at her child in wonder.

‘Why,’ said Johnny, ‘of course, I knew he meant me; but he needn’t have said it so loud.’

‘Oh! I see,’ she answered then. ‘You heard the minister say, “Thou shalt not steal.”’

‘Yes,’ said Johnny; ‘but he needn’t have called it out so loud.’

Now, the minister did not know anything about Johnny’s fault; for his mother did not tell any one that she could help. She was too much ashamed of her little son.

But, you see, it was that voice inside him, that we have been calling Mr. Ought and Oughtn’t, that was making him so wide awake and

quick to hear everything that was said about him.


People do not generally call that voice by the names that I have given it. I named it thus, because I thought that little folks could understand those names. But now I will tell you what most people call it. They name it '*Conscience.*' A long word, isn't it? But you will know now what it means; and you must think of it whenever you seem to hear something saying inside you, 'Now, don't do that,' or 'Do the other;' and you should recollect that God gives you that voice to speak to you, and tell you when you are try-

ing to do what is right and when you are not.

So never listen to the other voice which talks of likes and dislikes, if conscience says no. Mind that.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FIELD LESSON.

 YOU see what lots of things Johnny had to learn, and how difficult and even sad his lessons sometimes were.

But I am glad to tell you that we shall not have to talk about any more such dreadful things as the last chapter was about, for the little fellow never forgot that lesson as long as he lived.

Other things that May had to

teach him, were more like play; and Wolf often took great interest in watching how he got on with those lessons.

For sometimes he had to learn how to do things that Wolf had been expert in nearly all his life; and I dare say the good dog wondered how it was that his little master was so much behind himself in some matters.

Well, it is of no use trying to guess at Wolf's thoughts. Very likely they were funny enough at times, and would have made him laugh if he had been able; but that is a thing that no dog can manage, be he ever so clever; for no dog or

cat either has ever been known to laugh.

Yet Johnny could laugh when he was a tiny baby, you know ; so that was one difference between him and Wolf.

It was out in the fields and meadows that May taught him a great many things. Very often she did not know that she was teaching him anything ; and it did not seem like a lesson at all : she was just showing him how to do something ; and they both enjoyed those times together very much indeed. It was so nice running about amongst the sheep and lambs when the sun shone, and there were lots of sweet

wild' flowers, which they knew they might have without asking any one's leave, because they belonged to no one in particular. Often Johnny used to gather a lot of some kind that his sister asked for, and she would make them into chains, and wreaths, and crowns for herself and him.

Their mother used at one time to be rather afraid lest her baby-boy should put poisonous flowers or leaves into his mouth, and make himself ill. But Johnny was not a baby now; and he knew quite well that he must not put anything into his mouth that he picked in the fields. He had been told not to

taste anything ; and so he did not. And, as he did not, he could be trusted, you see.

May knew the names of some of the flowers that he brought her, and could teach him things about them that many London children know nothing of.

Shall I tell you some that Johnny had learnt to call by their names ? He could find daisies and buttercups, of course, a long time ago, and now he knew the pretty scarlet pimpernel, and the yellow one, too, and the poppy, and the lovely blue speedwell, and the forget-me-not, besides lots of other flowers. And he knew just where they grew, and what their

leaves were like ; and when he went to hunt for them Wolf always went to help. Johnny told him what kind he wanted ; but I don't know whether he understood that, only he liked to go with his master, and believed that Johnny could not do without him.

Perhaps he went to see that his little master did not get into danger ; but this he never told me : so I only know that he always seemed to enjoy himself very much indeed.

And, anyhow, he was useful ; for, in one of the fields in which they used to play, there were a number of tiny rills of water, not deep enough to hurt even Johnny, if he

lay flat down in them, except by making him very wet, but things to be avoided for all that.

Wolf knew that Johnny could not get over these little streamlets by himself; and often the grass grew so thickly in those places, that he might have slipped in without knowing that he was near one.

So Wolf always ran first to look out for them; and then, if she was wanted, he went to fetch May May.

Now, to tell a small secret, Master Johnny was not quite so clever at jumping as some little boys. You must not tell him that I told you, you know, if ever you meet with him, because no boys like to be thought

backward at such things as that. But the truth is that, being rather stout, he was not quite so light as some young men of his age, and could not jump so well.

And May, who did not like *her* boy to be behind any other, was becoming rather distressed at this, and was taking him in hand about it.

She did not explain her reason ; but nearly every day now she led him into one meadow, full of these little streams, but full of very nice flowers, too. There often are very nice ones by the side of streams and ditches, you know.

In this one there grew the tall meadow-sweet, and two or three

sorts of pink flowers—dog-roses, too, and honeysuckles ; and so, by going from one stream to another, they got splendid nosegays.

So Johnny had to practise jumping over the little rills a great deal ; he was tempted on by the sight of the flowers, or else he would not have tried—still he did not like them, and was in a great way when he had to jump.

However, in time May got him to go alone over the very very tiny ones ; at least, with only his friend Wolf, who jumped them so easily that he went over and back again two or three times while Johnny was thinking about it.

At last, there was only one to conquer ; but, poor little man, that was rather hard for his short, fat legs ; and May still helped him over it.

The first time she jumped over herself, to show him how easy it was ; and Wolf stood by looking very much interested, while she tried to encourage him to give a good jump.

He did not like to seem a coward, you know ; still he looked at that wide thing, as it seemed to him, and said once or twice, ‘ Me not a bigger boy ’nuff, May.’

‘ Well, if you’re not a bigger one, you’re a *big* boy enough,’ said May,

laughing. ‘Come along, now, and don’t be afraid. Now, for a good jump!’

But Johnny was rather afraid, for all that; and at last he jumped so timidly that down he went flat on his face, right into the water and grass.

I do believe that Wolf would have laughed then if he could. He seemed to understand so well that the little boy could not possibly have hurt himself. It was so shallow, and the grass on each side so thick and soft!

‘Oh, dear,’ said May, ‘what a pity! But never mind, that pinafore was just going to be washed;



“ Now for a good jump ! ”

it's only a little wet. We'll run home directly, and get another on for tea ; only, Johnny-boy, you can't be conquered by this small thing. I must come over and help you.'

So Johnny scrambled up again, and would not let himself cry ; for he knew he was not hurt—only just a little out of breath ; and May jumped over again as easily as possible ; and then she took her little man's hand, and said again :—

'Now, for a good jump !' and they both went over together in triumph, and got nicely to the other side, which made Johnny feel quite a big man, and so clever ; because,

though May did give him a good swing, still his own legs jumped, you know, and higher, too, than they had ever done before.

So this little rill was conquered ; and Johnny quite intended to jump all by himself to-morrow, and to let Wolf see what a clever boy he had got to be.

CHAPTER XII.

MAY'S PRESENT.

THEY had a good run home after that jump; for May was quite relieved: because she thought that now Sally Brown could not say that *her* brother was more forward of his age than Johnny.

And all that afternoon the little fellow amused himself with practising jumping from the first stair, then from the second, and afterwards

from mammy's hassock, while May told him stories about boys and horses.

He liked the stories about horses best of all ; for Johnny loved horses, and meant to have one himself when he should be a big, grown-up man !

May did not think then how soon that brother of hers might take to risking more serious falls than that into the tiny rill, when his short, fat legs have grown longer and less stout. At present, she was just bent on making a bold, brave boy of him, and delighted to see him so merry after that bit of a tumble.

For, indeed, this scrap of a Johnny filled a great part of May May's

heart; and her thoughts ran on him more than on anything else in the world.

Well, very soon after this she got a ride in a neighbour's cart to a big town where there were many fine shops, with plenty of pretty things to look at, set out tastefully in the windows.

She liked looking at these shops very much indeed, and especially at the toy-shops; in the windows of which there were dolls of all descriptions, rag dolls, wooden dolls, china dolls, wax dolls—tiny dolls, middle-sized dolls, large dolls, and one the size of a good big baby, at which she gazed for a very long time.

If May had had a pocketful of money she would have bought that great doll, I feel sure ; for she loved dolls with all her heart. But just then she had not so much as a single halfpenny, no, not one ! So all she could do was to indulge herself by looking as long as she could at the beautiful things in the window, and settling what she would have bought if she had been rich.

Johnny liked dolls, too, in his heart, she knew ; but he would not have chosen one for himself, because somebody had lately told him that dolls were only for girls.

But then there were many other toys, sheep and goats, donkeys and

horses; and many of each kind, and one horse that was marked, *Only one shilling.*

And now the idea came into her head that perhaps she might *earn* a penny now and then, and that if she saved them all up, possibly by Johnny's next birthday she might have got together a whole shilling and be able to buy it.

She thought of that little scheme all the way home, so that the good farmer's wife several times asked,

‘Had she not enjoyed her ride to that fine place?’ she was so quiet.

‘Oh, yes!’ May said; ‘and will you take me there some day again, Mrs. Grundler?’

‘Some day,’ kind Mrs. Grundler said.

And May grew silent again, for she was thinking of ways of earning money; nor was it long before she found them.

She got elevenpence pretty quickly; but the last penny seemed slow to come in her way; and just the day before the birthday, when neighbour Grundler had promised her a seat in her cart, she got up in the morning still this one penny short.

However, just at the last minute, in came a big girl, whom she well knew, crying out,

‘I’ve only a minute to run in and speak to you, but if you’ll take these

two patterns of stuff and get the man to match them for me, and bring back the parcel safe, I'll give you twopence, May.'

'Thank you, Betsy,' returned the little girl, flushing with pleasure. 'But I'd rather have only one penny and have it now than two afterwards, if you don't mind.'

'Oh, .I don't mind; but what's up?' asked Betsy.

'If you please, I can't tell you; it's a secret,' said May, decidedly.

'Well, here's your penny, child,' said Betsy, laughing, 'and you may have the other when you bring my parcel.'

'Thank you,' May said, eagerly,

and she ran up stairs, in great glee, to get ready.

So the happy girl went off in the cart to the great town, and when she came back she brought with her two parcels—one for Betsy, and the other we know for whom.

But Johnny did not; and he was very curious about it, as soon as he opened his eyes next morning; for he was asleep when his sister returned.

May let him wonder on all the while he was being dressed, and peep, too, on this side and on that; but she would not let him touch it.

‘Who put it there?’ asked the little laddie.

‘I did,’ answered May, looking very knowing.

‘And who buy’d it?’ he went on.

‘Who do you think?’ asked May.

‘Did ’ou?’ said Johnny; ‘and is it for me?’

‘For you? I dare say!’ returned his sister. ‘What in the world could possibly make you think of that?’

‘’Cause it my birfday,’ said Johnny, coaxingly.

‘Well, and suppose it were for you, now, what would you like it to be?’ replied May, laughing.

‘Me don’t know,’ said Johnny, rubbing his hands, and opening his eyes

very wide; 'me fink a soft white lamb.'

'A lamb? Oh, but it is not that,' said May; 'so you must wish for something else. Wouldn't you like a slate, now, to do sums on?'

'Me don't fink it a slate; me fink it got legs,' answered the little man, very knowingly.

'Legs!' exclaimed May. 'What can make you think that?'

'Me know it has, May May,' said Johnny; 'me sure it a great doggie.'

'Indeed it isn't,' May answered. 'You must guess again.'

'Oh! me can't. Show it to Johnny. Do, dear May;' and then



“A horse ! I declare ! Is it for Johnny ?”



the little man gave her such a number of very sweet kisses that his sister could not resist his pleading any longer, but began slowly untying the string.

‘A horse, I declare! Is it for Johnny?’ cried the little boy, jumping about for joy. And then kneeling down beside it, he began a thorough examination, stroking its mane, admiring its face, and counting its legs; interrupting himself every other minute by such exclamations as:—

‘Oh, it’s a booty! ’Ou dear horse, ’ou! ’Ou belong to me, ’ou know,’ and so on; while May stood by enjoying his pleasure more than

she could tell, and feeling very glad that she had kept her pennies, and not bought sweeties with them.

As for Johnny, in his ecstasy, he quite forgot, at first, to wonder how his May May got all the money to make this great purchase.

He thought of that at last, though, as he did of most things; and when his sister told him all about it—that this horse had cost twelve pennies, and how she had got each one—he innocently said—

‘ If Johnny had a penny, he’d buy a nice cakey; he wouldn’t save it.’


‘ But if May had done so, Johnny couldn’t have had his horsey,’ returned May.

‘Me fink ’ou a very good May May,’ answered the little man, giving her another hug.

And May was quite repaid for all her self-denial.

CHAPTER XIII.

A NEW GAME.

 O Johnny, you see, was really growing quite a little man. And just about this time something else happened to give him another jog onwards.

It is the way with all of us, and with all our lives. Something is always happening to make us keep pushing on, and either growing up or growing old.

And this something for Johnny,

was just a company of soldiers passing through the village in which he lived—a lot of men with red coats, and different hats from other men, and with swords by their sides, and guns, and bayonets.

Very fine fellows Johnny thought they looked ; and so, I believe, thought his little sister May also.

They had music with them, too ; and very nice music it was. And then they marched so well, all stepping out at the same time, holding their heads up, and their shoulders back, quite in a different way from the labourers, and carpenters, and tradesmen whom these children knew.

As for May, when she looked at them, the thought that came into her sisterly young head was, that she would much rather have her Johnny grow up to be a bold, noble looking youth, like some of them, than an awkward, clumsy sort of fellow, like the Johns, and Toms, and Timothys who were her neighbours.

And so, what did May do? Why, she went over to her grandfather one day, all by herself. And she asked her good, clever grandfather to make them some things such as soldiers carry.

Of course, he laughed, and wondered why a girl should want swords

and guns ; but she didn't mind that, as he said he would see what he could do for her.

May went back quite content with that promise ; and it was not many days before the kind old man brought over just what you see in the picture ; for his leg was quite well by that time, and he could walk as well as anybody.

And while he was sitting to rest himself, he asked for a sheet of white paper, and made such a famous cap of it, that Johnny felt himself a great soldier at once, and could almost fancy he had been in some of the battles of which grandfather told him.

There was not enough paper to make two caps ; so May decided that the one should be for Johnny, and that she would tie a piece of ribbon round her head, and stick a feather in it. The ribbon was a piece that had once been tied round her hat ; and the feather she had found on the common. That had formerly belonged to an old goose. May knew that, for she had seen it fall out of her wing ; and when it fell, she thought what a pity it was to lose such a good feather, and that she would have taken better care of it had it been hers. However, as the goose did not want it, May had picked it up and kept it for ever so



Johnny makes an excellent little soldier.

long ; and now it came in quite handily.

She had watched the soldiers do their exercises, too, and could show Johnny how to march and shoulder his musket like any drill-sergeant.

It was capital fun ; and Johnny made an excellent little soldier. He looked so nice and so boyish while he was 'on duty,' as they called it, that his sister was quite delighted.

Then another happy thought struck them.

There was a beautiful trumpet to be sold at that shop where May bought the horse ; and Johnny had twopence of his own now. So the two pennies were sent by the first

person who went to the town from their village, and the trumpet brought back. And then, what do you think they did?

Why, Johnny stood up boldly, and blew his trumpet like a man; and as for May, she got the sieve and a big spoon, with which she beat away on it, making believe that it was a drum; while Wolf, who often stood by during their games, held up his head and made a loud sort of noise, which perhaps he thought was singing.

So altogether they made a famous band.

Only I cannot recommend Miss May's drum; that I must say; be-

cause, you see, though she never thought of it, she might have beaten a hole in the sieve, which would not have pleased her good mother at all.

The two children and their dog were very happy, until the father began telling them in the evenings about what really happens in battles, how the men fight and kill each other, or give each other dreadful wounds that hurt very much; so that sometimes poor fellows are obliged to have their arms or their legs cut off, and do with only one, or perhaps without any, all the rest of their lives.

And then May decided that she had rather that Johnny should not

be a soldier when he was a man ; for that it would be very dreadful if he were to lose one of his good legs or arms. Nor, when she came to think of it, did she fancy that she would like it much better if he were to cut off somebody else's arm or leg.

It was all very well to play at soldiers, and to march about and make music, but not at all nice to think of killing and hurting people ; and May almost cried when she heard about the many poor children who have been expecting their dear fathers home after some great battle, and how the news have come that they would never, never see them any more, because they had died out

on some dreary far-off field, all wounded and thirsty, with no one near to nurse or cheer them.

May thought of all these sad things a great deal; and at last she went to her father, and asked:—

‘ Father, why do there be any soldiers, or any wars at all? God’s Book says that we ought to love one another.’

‘ Ah, May, and so we ought. But what if a great army should come here, right into England, and want to kill all the women and children, and take away our homes from us? Don’t you think that we strong men ought to fight them to prevent all the weak ones from being killed—

the poor little children who can't fight for themselves !'

'Oh, yes, father, I do indeed,' May said, eagerly.

'And so, you see, while the world is so wicked, we must have soldiers. But there will be a time, my dear girl,' he said, 'when there won't be any more quarrelling and fighting.

'That will be a happy time, won't it? I mean for all the good people. The bad people will be all turned out then, right out of God's sight; and the blessed Saviour will come again, and be King over all who love Him.'

I wonder if you know who that blessed Saviour is, my little reader?

May did ; but, in case you do not, I must tell you about Him some day, because He has done more for you than any one else ; and I want you to learn to love Him.

CHAPTER XIV.

JOHNNY LEARNS BY EXPERIENCE.

IT is a long time now since I told you anything about Johnny's white kitten,—that dear little creature that was such a pet of his even while it lived with its own mother in another house, and which he loved still more when it came to stay always with him, and to be his very own.

But one of poor Johnny's first troubles was about that little kitten ;

and a very great trouble it was, as I am going to tell you.

For it was not long before poor kitty was taken very poorly. Its young master did not know how to manage it, perhaps, as well as its own mother, and the silly little thing would get into mischief and danger.

First, it stayed out playing all one night—got away, you know, so that it could not be found when it was wanted; and when they opened the door next morning, there was kitty sneezing away. It had caught a bad cold.

May and Johnny were greatly concerned about that; and they

nursed the little creature very tenderly, feeding it with warm milk, and making a nice bed for it by the kitchen fire.

Still, it had a cough, and grew weak and thin, and did not care to play as merrily as it used to do.

Our little laddie became quite anxious about his baby cat, and would nurse and watch it by the hour together.

By degrees it got better, and more like itself, and they were all growing happier, when what should happen but that a strange dog, something like one that once attacked Johnny himself, should fly at the poor pussy when nobody was by to take care of it, and

bite it so much that it would have been killed at once, if a kind man had not made the furious thing loose his hold, and then carried the little wounded cat indoors to Johnny's mother !

Happily, he was out in the fields with May just then ; so poor kitty was washed, and fed, and laid in its own bed before the children came in. But I cannot tell you how grieved they were, nor how Johnny cried when he heard his pet cry, and when his mother told the story.

And you will not much wonder if I tell you that he went to bed in a desperate rage with the ' horrid great

dog' as he called him, and declaring that if he could catch him he would cut off his head with his wooden sword.

Well, in spite of all Johnny's plans of revenge, and all the care they took of the wounded pet, poor pussy died; and though its young master sobbed as if his heart would break, yet they were obliged to dig a hole and bury it.

Johnny was very sad for a day or two after that. He wondered whether he should ever get another kitten; and he used to talk to all the cats that he met, and ask them whether they had any baby ones to give to him.

You see, this little man loved animals; and he had not found out yet that all cats are not kind and gentle any more than all dogs. But live and learn, you know; only don't expect everything that you learn to be pleasant.

Master Johnny soon learnt a lesson that he did not like at all.

For one day there came into his mother's kitchen a very big, fine cat. That is, it was fat, and had a nice, thick, smooth coat; though, as for its face, that was not to my fancy. However, people have different opinions about beauty; and our young friend fell in love with it at once, and, running up to this new

acquaintance, he began to try to make friends with her.

But Mrs. Puss was not to be so easily won. She knew her own worth better than that ; and, instead of advancing to meet the young gentleman, she drew back and took a good look at him.

Not a bit daunted, Johnny ran after her, and put out his hand to give her a friendly pat. But she only bristled up at that and began to spit. Of course, that meant that she was angry at the liberty he was taking ; yet he did not understand. He only laughed at the funny noise, and suddenly seized her by one ear, and that so tightly, that she could not escape.



Puss can scratch if Johnny can pull.

‘No matter,’ thinks she; ‘I have other ways of defending myself.’

So, as Johnny held her by his right hand, out goes Mrs. Puss’s right paw, with the claws out, too; and then the other fat arm feels them so sharp, that its owner soon pulls it back, and lets go his hold.

So, you see, he finds out that puss can scratch if Johnny can pull, and that if this cat is ever to be his friend, he must try and win her more cautiously, and not be in such a hurry about it.

Johnny was no coward, you know, and he was not going to be daunted by that little bit of a scratch.

CHAPTER XV.

A NEW FRIEND FOUND.

BUT Johnny had no idea of all the learning being on his side.

He made up his mind that puss did not approve of either her ears or her moustache being touched; and he told May this when some time after she was going to pat her head.

‘No, don’t, May,’ he said, ‘this pussy doesn’t like that. You must only stroke her back.’

Nevertheless, he had taken a fancy

to this cat ; and, as she seemed bent on coming into his mother's kitchen, he thought that he would make a friend of her in place of his dear dead kitten.

True, this was a grown-up cat ; and she would not submit to all the lugging about which his dear kitty had quite enjoyed.

Still, when puss had got over her tantrum, and was in a mood to listen, the little man gave her a great lecture on the mean, spiteful habit of scratching, which he told her he considered 'quite 'bominable,' that he 'wouldn't have it,' and that, if she persisted, she 'shouldn't come into their house at all.'

To all this puss seemed to listen very properly ; though I can't say how much she understood. But, at any rate, she went on lapping away at her saucer of milk, without attempting to give a saucy answer.

And Johnny was quite sure in his own mind that this little talking to had done her as much good, as he remembered similar ones to have done himself ; so that afterwards, whenever May used to say, ' Take care, Johnny, she'll scratch you,' he would answer, ' Oh, no, May, she won't. Me have told her dat she mustn't.'

And puss certainly very soon seemed to understand Johnny, and

to mind what he said better than might have been expected. Nor did she ever hurt him again.

I dare say she found him quite as agreeable a companion as he found her ; for, as soon as ever she had got into a good humour after that first scratch, he gave her a piece of the cake that he was eating—some of his own grandmother's making, you know. And after that she often got a part of his meals.

So they were soon very good friends, though this cat never became a favourite with other people ; because she was generally considered to be bad-tempered. And, indeed, I don't think that she had the very

best disposition in the world ; for, when Johnny's father wanted to stroke and pet her, she would always run away if she could, and if held fast, she used to spit and try to scratch. And then Johnny's father would say to him, ' I can't think what you see to like in that animal, my little lad.'

' She's such a dear pussy ; she 'oves me,' Johnny would answer ; and that was about the truth.

She did love Johnny, and understand him, too ; and when people both love and understand each other, why that makes them friends ; and it is only right that they should stand up for one another.

And I think that God has given



They are soon very good friends.

to many animals a love and tenderness for little children which is very wonderful. This is one of the ways in which our Heavenly Father takes care of boys and girls who are too young to take care of themselves, and who, perhaps, have not much taking care of in other ways.

Certainly, Johnny himself had often, when a little baby, pulled good Wolf about in a way that he would have thought very rude in a grown-up person. But I am sure that Wolf knew that he was only a baby, and meant nothing but love.

If he had not known that, poor Johnny would have come in for many a sharp bite, not only from

Wolf, but also from some of Wolf's friends and relations.

But, as it was, Wolf was very seldom away from his side, and when any of his kindred came near them, and showed the least disposition to be impudent, the good dog would say plainly enough in his way—

‘Touch my little master, if you dare.’

It is only just and fair, however, to tell you that this noble Wolf had rather a fit of jealousy about that cat.

The little kitten he had not minded at all, looking on it only as a baby, perhaps; and though at first he treated it with some contempt,

yet afterwards, when he understood that it was a great pet of Johnny's, he took it under his protection, and when it died, he seemed quite melancholy.

But this great, big cat was altogether different; and the first time Wolf saw her he flew at her like a regular fury, and tried to drive her away. However, the cat would not go. She only put up her back and spit at him, making as ugly a face as she could, to show him how she hated him.

Johnny was in great distress, for he did not know what to do between his two friends, and could not approve of the conduct of either.

He was looking as grave as a judge when May came into the yard, and crying out—

‘Wolf, Wolf, be quiet. She’s a very nice pussy. Don’t *dwive* her away.’

But Wolf only gave a short answering bark, as much as to say, You don’t know anything about it. She’s a good-for-nothing, detestable creature, like cats in general; and she ought to be driven off these premises.

The next order, however, he minded more.

‘Come here, Wolf; come to me *diwectly*,’ cried Johnny, almost in despair.

And, though as loath as could be, the angry dog went to his side. He had never refused to come when Johnny called — never, in all his life; and he could not do so now, even though, when he got to him, he only stood and barked at his enemy.


But as soon as Johnny could get hold of him, he would not let go again, but, with his arms round his neck, he kept begging and beseeching him to be quiet, until he subsided into a low, occasional growl; and as he did not fly, the cat left off spitting.

After this first battle there were many little skirmishes, but no other

so serious ; and though puss kept up the grudge the longest, and would snap and snarl, yet Wolf soon came to understand that he must put up with the intruder and just let ' this strange pet ' alone.

CHAPTER XVI.

JOHNNY TRIES TO BE USEFUL.

O Master Johnny got to feel himself a sort of king over his pets, and began to think his powers very pleasant. Only, unfortunately, he did not see that it was because he was little and weak that they minded him, but thought, on the contrary, that it was because he was growing so clever and strong!

May soon found that he could be very contented now without her by

the hour together ; and sometimes, as she sat on the garden steps learning to mend his socks, she used to give a little sigh, and almost wish that the time would come back again when he was only a baby child and could not do without her.

‘ Yet,’ she would think to herself, ‘ I *wanted* Johnny to grow big and clever, so I mustn’t grumble. He can’t be big and little at the same time.’

And for some things it was nice to have him getting big.

For instance, he could walk now quite a long way without being tired, and without helping himself by nearly dragging her arm off.

And then neither father nor mother minded the children's going now, as they liked, to see the old people at Elm Cottage, though, of course, they had to ask leave before they went.

Johnny thought it was delightful fun to go there, because of the interesting stories that granddaddy told, and the splendid toys that he would make for him out of wood and cardboard.

A dear old couple they were, who had worked very hard in their time, and seen a good deal, too ; so that they had plenty to talk about.

As I said, Johnny was always wanting to go and see them ; and he

was becoming so very independent, that he could not at all make out why he might not go to them quite by himself, when his mother could not spare May to go with him.

Indeed, there was something growing up in our little friend's heart—inside him, you know, I mean—which I will leave you to find a name for, after I have told you about some strange things that it made him do, and a rather awkward plight into which it led him.

Now, Johnny's father, you must know, was a man who rather loved a joke and a laugh; and his young son often amused him very much by the queer things that he did and said.

Well, it happened one evening that the mother was not at all well. She had a very bad headache, and was glad to let May make the tea, while she rested in her arm-chair.

For May could make the tea very nicely, and as for the bread and butter, the father said that he would cut that, and that they must all be very quiet, and not disturb poor mother.

So Master Johnny, who was rather in high spirits that day, and had been prepared for an extra good game, began to look quite demure, and made a great effort to be steady and quiet.

But it was very hard. Indeed, his young legs had the fidgets in

them so badly, that it was almost impossible for him to make them be still.

And very soon a pair of kind eyes were looking at him, and making out how the case stood.

Those eyes belonged to his father, if you wish to know. His two ears had heard such a merry, ringing laugh directly he stepped over the door-sill, that he seemed to guess at once how things stood. So his ears set his eyes looking, and his eyes made his brain think. Johnny wondered why his father was looking at him in that way; and he began to get rather red, and feel a little bit uncomfortable.

‘Why, hullo! here’s no wood, and hardly a bit of coal; we shall have the fire out directly,’ cried his father just at this moment. ‘Come here, Johnny, my man; and I’ll tell you what you shall do. We can all make ourselves useful if we try.’

Johnny slipped off his chair in a moment, delighted to have an excuse for moving those poor fidgety legs of his.

‘Here, you run out there, my man,’ continued the good father, opening a back door. ‘I forgot to chop those big logs up this morning, but out there in the yard I have just put down a lot of little chips. You

go quietly and bring ever so many in, a few at a time.'

So Johnny set to work, and soon finished that task ; looking so beaming and happy over it, that he soon got sent on some more errands, the mother watching him as she lay back in her chair with such pride, and the father so pleased because he went so quickly, and managed to lift such great big loads, that he called him his brave little lad, and said—of course, in fun—that he supposed he would soon be able to go to New York and back all by himself, and without any directions.

Now Johnny did not know one bit where New York was ; but he did

know that it was a very long way off, because his father had told him so.

It was bed-time soon after this ; and May took him up to undress him after he had kissed his father and mother ; but when he got upstairs there seemed nothing for her to do. It was all, ‘I can, I can ; you needn’t help me, May.’ But, of course, he was not half washed, as you may be sure, only as mother was so poorly, May thought she would say nothing about it.

‘I wish I had that book about gardening,’ said Johnny’s father next morning at breakfast ; ‘but it’s over at the old people’s, and I don’t know when I shall find time to fetch it.’

‘No, father,’ said May, ‘it’s at Mrs. Wilson’s now, I know; grandfather lent it her only yesterday.’

‘Then you and Johnny just run over and borrow it for me, and say I’ll return it next week,’ answered the father.

And May said, ‘Yes,’ while Johnny clapped his hands; for he always liked a little run of any kind; and besides, I rather think that he thought that thus he should get an opportunity of carrying out a little scheme of his.

However, we shall see.

When they got to the door, May was going to turn the handle as soon as she had knocked, and heard some one say, ‘Come in.’



"I can, I can," said Johnny.

But 'I can, I can,' said Johnny ; and she let him try, and didn't say, 'I know you can't,' though she thought so.

The handle was rather high for the enterprising young gentleman. He had to stand on tiptoe, and pull very hard. But with all his efforts it did not move ; and Wolf stood by, wondering why he did not put down the flower-pot he had brought with him, and use both hands.

'Handles shouldn't be so high,' cried the little man impatiently.

'They are made for taller people than you,' said May. 'Shall I help you ?'

'No, no ; I can, I can : only it is

so 'tiff,' returned Johnny, giving another tug without moving it a bit.

He had his shoes on, too, which, of course, made him decidedly taller than he would have been without them.

CHAPTER XVII.

JOHNNY'S SCHEME.



JOHNNY is not so clever as he thinks. Even Wolf seemed to come to that conclusion at last, and went away towards home quite tired of waiting, which, when Mrs. Wilson's cat perceived, she came up mewling and whining, as if to say—

‘Do be reasonable, and let your sister help you.’

‘Come in; come in,’ some one

kept saying. 'Why don't you open the door?'

And at last Johnny was obliged to come down a bit, and say—

'I wish you'd *show* me, May, only don't *do* it, you know.'

So May showed him ; and it soon opened then, as silly little Johnny thought, all because of his turning and pulling. As for May's help, that went for nothing.

Then May made haste to do her errand, and they both set off homewards.

Johnny, however, did not go far. He thought to himself, 'Now I'll see what a big boy I am.'

May was talking to her doll, and



Johnny is not so clever as he thinks.

to Mrs. Wilson's cat, who chose to walk by her side; and she never saw when Johnny slipped inside a neighbour's gate, and said to a boy, whom he knew, 'Johnny wants to hide. Let me in.'

This boy was bigger than Johnny, and ready for any mischief, so he hid him in a minute; and when May came back in a fright, asking, 'Have you seen our Johnny, Tom? Oh! have you seen him?' he said, boldly, 'No, not I.'

And Johnny heard him, but did not cry out. He would not have told a lie himself, but he let another boy do it for him.

So poor May ran on, and turned

down another way to see if Johnny had taken that turning. And as soon as she was gone, her little brother popped out, and set off on the road to the Elms.

He knew it quite well now, and was only afraid that some one should overtake him and turn him back.

The first part of the road was straight and wide, and he kept looking back to see if he were followed; and once or twice, when he saw a girl or a woman, like May or his mother, he squeezed right down under the hedge until they had gone past. His heart beat at those times very hard and loud; and he almost wondered what was the matter with

him, because, as he kept saying to himself, of course his father would not mind now that he was such a great big boy.

He met a dog after a little while, a nice, quiet animal, with whom he might safely have made friends; but he thought of the rough one that he had met once on a time, and was very glad to see it go quietly past him.

Next came some strange boys and girls, laughing and chatting. They looked hard at him, and several asked, 'Does your father know you're out?' in a way that made him feel very much offended.

He shrank away from their touch,

and marched on with the air of a great man, feeling very angry because he could hear them laughing at him for a good while.

Next he saw a big man coming towards him, and soon he made him out to be Richard Walker, the carpenter, whom most people called Dick; and he felt rather afraid that he would ask him some questions.

And so he did; for Dick was quite surprised to see the little fellow alone so far from home.

‘Hulloa, my lad!’ he cried. ‘Is that you? Why, where’s your sister? Has she gone and left you all by yourself?’

‘May’s dorn home,’ said Johnny,

for, with all his bravery, he could not yet speak plainly.

‘What, and left you alone? I never!’ said the man.

‘Yes,’ said Johnny, colouring; for he had a sort of feeling that this ‘yes’ would make Dick think her very unkind.

But the carpenter was a sharp man, and soon suspected that all was not right; so he asked:—

‘And where are you off to?’

‘I’m going to granddad’s,’ said Johnny, stoutly.

‘And who sent you?’ pursued the man.

‘I sent myself,’ answered Johnny.

‘You sent yourself! And never

told nobody, I suspect,' cried Dick, taking hold of the child, and lifting him on to his shoulders. 'Come, my lad, this won't do. I shall just carry you back to your mother.'

But Johnny did not approve of this at all. He struggled hard to get down; but it was of no use, Dick held him tight.

It was not long before they heard cries of 'Johnny, Johnny!' in the distance; and soon Wolf was seen tearing along the road as if he were frantic, followed by May and a number of other people.

'There! 'Tis as I said,' cried Dick. 'You've been giving them all the slip, and frightening them finely.'

Well, I needn't tell you how delighted poor May was, and Wolf, and all of them, when they saw what the good carpenter carried. Johnny was the only person who was not pleased; and I am sorry to say that he would not hear that he had been a naughty boy at all, but stood out that he knew father would not mind.

He found out his mistake, though, that evening; and it was a long time before he took another walk by himself.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MORE ABOUT MAY.

AND now, perhaps, you will be glad to hear that May got presents, too, sometimes, as well as Johnny. You know she deserved them; don't you? Well, her father thought so, too; and one day when he went to market, he brought back a delightful skipping-rope, which pleased her very much.

She very quickly learnt to skip quite beautifully; for May, I must



May does it so easily.

tell you, was a good deal lighter than Johnny: and she could jump ever so high!

Her little brother perfectly shouted with pleasure when he saw her going up and down inside that skipping-rope, which moved so fast that it looked almost like a wheel.

May did it so easily, that Johnny thought it quite simple, and instantly began to cry out, 'Let me try, May. Oh, do let me.'

May soon put the rope into his hands; and Master Johnny began to jump and to flourish it about; but he hit himself in the face, and twisted it round his neck, and was soon discouraged, and even rather

cross, because he could not do just as May did.

So when his sister saw that, she coiled the rope all together and took it home ; and then they sat down together to watch the lambs ; for May was always sorry to see her little charge growing pettish and cross. She knew a way of keeping down her own naughty tempers, which the little boy had not yet found out ; and that day she was full of some thoughts that she wanted to put into Johnny's head, if she could only find out how to do it.

Now, it happened that in that field there were several big sheep and some little lambs ; so they sat

together watching them : for Johnny liked the little lambs, and often wished he had one of his own.

So they watched a good while ; but never once did those lambs fight or get cross all the morning. And when the great big sheep called out, ‘Ba, ba,’ these little lambs always answered, ‘Ma, ma,’ and ran to them directly.

‘Me fink dem very good lambs,’ said Johnny after a little while.

‘Yes,’ said May ; ‘I don’t think they ever get cross like somebody I know.’

‘Me wish me didn’t,’ said Johnny with a great sob. ‘Always me fink me be a good boy ; and den me isn’t.’

‘That’s because you’ve got a naughty heart inside you, Johnny,’ said May. ‘I’ve got a naughty heart inside me, too; and so has everybody.’

‘’Ou not c’oss like me,’ said Johnny.

‘Oh, yes, I am,’ said May; ‘only when I feel very bad, I pray to Jesus; and He helps me to be good. Jesus is the Son of God, you know; and He came down here to our world once, and was a little baby, and then a little boy, and afterwards a man. And he came on purpose to help us, Johnny boy.’

‘Me never saw Him,’ replied Johnny.

‘No; because He went back to heaven a long time ago, up in a cloud, you know, and right out of sight. Some good men saw Him go up; and some day He’ll come down again the same way. But He can see us all the while; and He knows how to help us and make us good. Why don’t you ask Him, Johnny, when you feel cross?’

‘Me don’t know how, May,’ returned the little boy. ‘’Sides, perhaps He wouldn’t hear.’

‘Oh, yes, He would,’ May said quickly. ‘Jesus is God, you know; and God hears every word we say. When you feel cross, if you were to say, “Oh! Lord Jesus, take away

the naughty feelings," He would hear, even if you only whispered.'

'Would He?' said Johnny, looking into May's eyes in a wondering kind of way.

'Yes,' said May, 'that He would; and He always loved little children, and let them come to Him. God's Book says that He was like a lamb—so good and gentle, and never cross when He was a little boy. Wouldn't you like to belong to Him, and be His own child, Johnny?'

'Yes; me should,' said the little fellow.

'And so should I,' replied his sister.

And then kissing him, she murmured, 'Oh! Johnny, Johnny, I do

so want that you and me may both belong to Jesus.'

Then a big tear fell on the little boy's cheek. It had dropped from May's eye ; and when Johnny felt it there, he brushed it off, and lifted up his face very quickly, and looked into his sister's eyes.

Perhaps you may suppose that he said, ' Why are you crying, May ? ' But he did not. He only wiped the wet tears away with the corner of his pinafore, and gave her cheeks two or three very gentle pats with his little fat hands ; and then he heaved a little sigh, and said,

' Me fink we better go home to dinner, May.'

CHAPTER XIX.

WHAT MAY TAUGHT JOHNNY.

THERE were plenty of nice places to walk in where May and Johnny lived ; meadows, and fields, and woods, and one sweet shady spot near a pond, in which very often there were some pretty ducks swimming about.

It was quite a little pond, though, and not deep ; or the children would never have been allowed to go near it, for fear they should be drowned.

May and Johnny had many a nice game of play there under the trees ; and after that skipping-rope came, it went out with them most days ; and when May had had a good skip to show him how to do it, she always let Johnny try himself ; for she did not like him to give up anything, you know, and often repeated her mother's words ' to him—' Nothing like patience ; nothing in the world like that.'

So Johnny tried and tried ; and when he was inclined to be cross, because he could not do it, he tried to conquer that feeling, and to be a good-tempered little boy, as he knew he ought to be.

But the skipping was very hard for him, for all that. His legs were so fat, you see; and he was so fat altogether, that he really could not jump lightly like his sister; and then the rope would twist and hit his face. It seemed as if he never would be able to do it at all.

Only May thought he did it a little better every day; and she did not like him to leave off trying.

And after he was tired of skipping, very often the reading-book came out of May's pocket; and Johnny spelt d-o do, and s-o so, and g-o go, loud enough for the ducks to hear, even if they were right on the other side of the pond, though



Nothing like patience.



they did not seem much interested in the lesson.

When that was done, why they played at something else ; perhaps at hide and seek, or at making daisy-chains, and then at pretending to be horses. And very happy they were, those two little children, I can tell you, though their father still was poor, and could not often get good work ; and so they had to take care of their shoes, and wear them only for best, and do without many things that other children have.

Perhaps, if they had heard their father and mother grumble, and say very often how hard it was that others should be better off than they were,

it might have made them discontented, too. But their father and mother were thankful people, you see, and always taught their children that God knows what is best for us.

So they were well off together, that little brother and sister, and had many and many a pleasure that some richer children know nothing about.

And after that little talk that I told you about in the last chapter, they often had others like it. Then Johnny liked to be read to, as you will remember, so May sometimes took her book and read to him when he was tired of running about and was willing to sit quite still and listen.

Shall I tell you what she read one day?

It was this :—

Once upon a time there were some men sitting out in the fields—on the hills, I think—watching a number of sheep. It was night-time. But these sheep never were brought into a fold : they wandered about, and lay down to sleep, just where they liked on these pleasant hills. Only they had to be watched, because there were other animals there as well, and some, such as bears and lions, that were always ready to eat up these poor sheep whenever they could get them.

So the men, who were called

shepherds, lighted their fires and sat together by them, some talking, and some, I dare say, sleeping, but always ready to fight for these sheep when there was any danger.

Now there came one night when they had a great surprise; for, all of a sudden, a bright being stood before them, and a bright light shone all around them. And when they were frightened, the bright angel spoke, and bid them not to be afraid at all, for he had come to tell them good news.

These good news were that a little baby was just born in a place not far off, and that this baby was Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

And while he was telling how this baby might be found, and that He was in a manger, out of which cows and horses eat, suddenly a number of other angels joined him, and they all began singing a hymn together, in which they praised God.

Then they went back to heaven, and the shepherds began talking, and saying that they would go and see the baby child. So they went to Bethlehem; and there they found Him with His mother, Mary.

Afterwards, they went about telling what they had seen and heard, and how this was the very Saviour that God had said long ago that He would send; how they had read

about Him, and heard about Him, and now had seen Him themselves.

Then many people talked together, and wondered what this child would do when He grew up ; and every one who heard told somebody else, and so a great many people got to know in time.

But Jesus grew up very quietly, doing everything that His mother, Mary, told Him, and minding her husband Joseph, too. It was a quiet life ; and they lived in a quiet place, and in time people left off wondering about Him. Yet this was the great Saviour about whom the angels sang. Another day you shall hear of some of the loving things He did.

CHAPTER XX.

SUCH A CAPITAL PLAN!

BUT Johnny had ways of amusing himself, as I told you before, without always requiring May May's help. He loved above all things to watch some of the birds that flew about near his father's cottage, and see how they made their nests.

For there were some nests that he could see quite well; some that were made among the thatch of one part

of the roof that was close by his own particular window ; some that were in a hedge that went round a field, in which he often played ; and some in the low boughs of a tree into which, with May's help, he could easily climb, and sit among the branches.

It was nice first to count the eggs, and watch how the old mother bird sat upon them, and then to see the little ones when they came out of the egg, and could only chirp and cry for the flies, and insects, and worms which the daddy and mammy birds often brought. But some of his little favourites could fly a wee bit now, and used to go hopping

about with their mother, picking and pecking for themselves.

Johnny thought there were too many for the mother to attend to now; and wanted very much to persuade one of the little ones to go home with him, and live in a pretty cage that he promised to get for them. But they did not seem at all inclined; and always hopped away when he put out his hand to take them. However, a young friend of his told him of a way that, he said, would catch any bird, little or big.

It was, to make a nice paper bag, in the shape of a sugar-loaf, you know, and then to put a few spoonfuls of salt in that, and carry it out

to sprinkle on the birds' tails when he next saw them.

So when he had made his preparations, the little man went forth one day ; and, at the first sight of a bird, out came a pinch of salt. And with this in his hand, he ran merrily after them, calling out, ' Come here ; oh ! come here. I've got somesing so nice for 'ou 'ickle birdies.'

Johnny was quite sure that the salt would answer ; but somehow it did not ; and before it was all scattered about, the little birds had flown far away, without any of their tails looking at all white.

Poor Johnny ! He was so disappointed—even a little inclined to be

angry, I fancy ; for he thought it so stupid and ungrateful of them all to prefer being free to go wherever they liked, from tree to tree in the green woods, rather than accompany him home to be shut up and made a pet of, in the dearest, prettiest cage that ever was seen.

Therefore, finding it of no use to stay out, he ran home again to tell his sister all about it. And so excited and indignant was he, that I can tell you she had some trouble in getting him calm and happy again.

CHAPTER XXI.

A PRETTY SIGHT.

BUT though Johnny did not succeed in catching even one of the little birds, and though he was so vexed and cross with them for not caring to have those nice pinches of salt on their tails that would have made them so easy to catch, as he thought, yet he very soon got over his anger with them, and went out again, accompanied by his horse, to see if he

could find out where they had gone.

He walked about very softly and gently in that same woody spot where he had tried to catch them ; but for a good while there was not a bird to be seen.

At last, however, he thought he heard a little chirping somewhere up over his head ; and then a bird flew over him ; and when he looked up to discover where it went, what do you think he saw ? Oh, such a pretty sight ! Up there, right in the boughs of one of the low trees that rose out of the bushes there was a good big nest. Out of the top of the nest stretched three little heads,

all with open beaks, while just outside this nest, on one side, was a fourth little chirper, who seemed to be rather bolder than his brothers and sisters; and on the other side, on another bough, watching them all, was the mother bird, looking as if she were very pleased to see that the father had brought them something to eat. Then the father bird hovered over them all, and put something into their tiny beaks, after which he talked a little in his way, and off he went, and the mother, too, to see what other good things they could find.

Johnny stood on tip-toe to watch, and he kept as quiet as a mouse, be-



The dear little birds are calling their papa and mamma.



cause he had found out that a very small noise would frighten birds away from him. But when the father and mother birds had gone, and the young ones had all cuddled down together in the bottom of the nest, he crept quietly away to his sister, who was sitting on the grass at a little distance, and said, 'The dear little birds are calling their papa and mamma;' and then she went back with him to get a peep.

Afterwards, they both sat down on a mossy bank to talk about these same dear little birds, and wonder when they would be able to come out of their nest and fly about, like the parent ones. In a short time

they got tired of talking over the birds; and May grew very silent; while Johnny rolled about on the bank as if he did not know what to do.

At last he said, 'Read Johnny a story like that nice one about the shepherds, please, May.'

'I haven't got my book, Johnny,' she said; 'so I can't. But if you like, I think I can tell you something that is in it. And do you know, looking at that nest has made me think of it.'

'Has it, May?' said the little boy, as if he could not think how that could be.

'Yes, Johnny,' she went on. 'It

was like this : when the Lord Jesus, our Saviour, who was born in Bethlehem, as I told you, grew up to be a man, he didn't stay at home with his mother, but he went all over the country, preaching to the people, and making the sick people well, and the lame people walk, and the deaf people hear, and the blind people see.'

'The b'ind people like Jimmy Turner !' said Johnny, opening his eyes very wide. 'How could He ?'

'Ah ! I can't tell you,' May answered. 'He was God, you see ; and He made the people's eyes ; so, of course, He could cure them when they didn't see. And He was so good that He loved everybody, and

didn't like anybody not to be able to see.'

'No,' answered Johnny. 'It must be *drefful*! Me s'ouldn't like it.'

'Well, the good Saviour left His mother's home when He was a man, Johnny, and used to go about long, long journeys till He got very tired, on purpose to teach all sorts of wicked people, and to make them well when they were bad, and then, when the night came, often He had not got any place to sleep in.'

'Me s'ouldn't 'ike that,' said Johnny. 'It wouldn't be nice to s'leep out of doors in the dark. P'aps it might rain!'

‘Yes; but Jesus loved everybody, and didn’t think about Himself,’ said May. ‘It says in God’s Book that the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but He hadn’t any place to lay His head.’

‘Me would have given Him me’s own bed,’ Johnny said, with very tearful eye. ‘Me wish He had a good p’ace to s’leep in.’

‘He might have made one,’ May answered, ‘because He was God, and God can do anything. But He was only thinking of people that weren’t happy and well.’

‘Me fink Jesus was very kind,’ said little Johnny.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE WOUNDED BIRD.



SUPPOSE that no little boy or girl will wonder that Johnny's small head was very full of the 'dear dickies,' as he called them, after the discovery of that nest in the tree. He did not talk of much else all the afternoon, either to his mother, who was at home washing, or to young Sammy Jenkins, who came in to play with him ; though, when he was going to

bed, I believe some other thoughts came back that May had put into his mind in the morning; and mammy and he had a nice chat together, as he sat by her side, before he shut his eyes and went to sleep.

It rained all the next day, so he could not go to see his new friends; and the day after, the ground was so wet that their mother told May that she must take him for a walk out on the dry paths by the roadside, and not let him go on the grass at all.

So poor Johnny's temper and patience were really tried, as any little boy will acknowledge; and if he was not quite good-humoured all day long we must not wonder. I

do think he did his best not to fret, after May reminded him that it was God who had sent the rain, and that, if it was not pleasant to him, it was very good for the grass and corn.

On the third day,—that was Thursday,—when they woke in the morning, it was quite fine, and the sun was shining beautifully. Johnny was in great spirits; and he made all the haste he could to dress and go down to breakfast.

Afterwards, he was quite handy in helping his mother and May to put all the things away; and when he saw that all was done, he said :—

‘ Now, May May, let us go.’

‘ Oh ! that’s what it is that you’re

after,' said his mother, laughing; and May answered,—

‘Yes, mother; didn’t you know?’

Then she got their hats, and off they set. It did not take long to get to the place; but, oh! dear, dear, when they got there, what do you think they saw? Ah! no nest at all! Only a little bit of straw sticking in the tree; and the bushes were all broken and trodden down. Some one had seen the nest, too; that was certain. May got very red, and she looked quite indignant, but she did not speak for a minute, and then she said:—

‘Some boys have been here—some naughty, cruel boys, I’m sure; and

they've taken the nest and the young ones all away. What a shame ! I wonder where the parent birds have gone ? Poor things ! How sorry they must be !'

' And so is me,' said Johnny, sobbing, and speaking very angrily. ' They are bad, bad boys. Me hope somebody will beat them.'

Then the poor little man threw himself down on the ground, crying and sobbing as if his heart would break.

May did all she could to comfort him, and make him think of the grief of the father and mother birds, and forget his own ; but he only began, then, to cry for them, too, and

to say, over and over again, something cross about those ‘horrid boys.’

At last, when he seemed to have cried himself out, May proposed to go home for his horse and the skipping-rope; and, as he made no objection, she took his hand, and they set off together.

But they had not gone many steps before May stopped, and said, ‘Hark, Johnny! Listen!’

For she heard a little feeble, chirping cry in the bushes; and in a minute she began to search all about.

‘Oh, here it is! Here it is; the poor little thing!’ she exclaimed, but

in a low tone. And Johnny came close to see what it was.

‘Oh, oh!’ he said, too, when he saw. ‘The dear, the dear!’

‘Don’t, Johnny,’ said May. ‘You’ll frighten it away. I think it is hurt. Perhaps it fell out of the nest, and its mother did not see it because she was frightened. It was too young to fly.’

As she spoke, May was trying to take the little downy thing in her hands; but it was right in amongst the brambles; and though it could not fly, it managed to hop and get away from her at first. Soon, however, she caught it; and then she sat down on the grass, and cooed over



"Perhaps if we are kind to him he will get well," said May.

it, and stroked it very gently, to try and make it happy. But it trembled all over; and one tiny wing hung down in a strange sort of way, and seemed to hurt it.

As for Johnny, he was all excitement, and kept crying out,—

‘Is it ill, May? Is it hurt? Let me have it.’

‘No, no; don’t touch it, Johnny. I think it is very much hurt. I’ll take it home to mother in my pinafore, and perhaps, if we are kind to him, he will get well,’ said May.

‘Yes; we’ll take him to mother,’ said Johnny, who seemed to feel that that was a very good thought, and perhaps believed that his mother

could cure the little wounded bird, just as she did himself, with one of those wonderful kisses.

And, sure enough, the little thing did seem to revive very soon after they got in, and the mother had given him something nice to eat, and, —at Johnny's particular request,—kissed him ; so that our little laddie was soon able to have him in his own fat hands under careful May May's eyes.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FATHER'S PLAN.

BUT the thing was what to do with the poor pet ; for, you see, it was not like a kitten or a puppy, which could live in a basket, and be nursed by the fire if they were hurt. Master Dickey could not quite fly, but he could have *almost*, if he had not got hurt, for he was nearly old enough. And as soon as he got a little better, they found that he could hop very well,

and might hop out at the door, if he were not looked after.

In fact, he wanted a cage, and there was no cage for him in the house, nor any money to buy one.

Mother said: 'We must wait till father comes home, and see what he'll say.' But when he did come, he was as puzzled, at first, as the rest of them.

'I've got it,' he cried at last, as he came back from the cupboard where the mother kept her things with that same sieve in his hand that had once served May for a drum. Here, we'll make the little fellow as comfortable as we can—poor little motherless thing that he is. So,

Johnny, just go out into the yard, and pick up any bits of straw and hay that you see. And you, May, go and ask mother for a nice little piece of wool ; and then we'll see if we can't make him a nice soft nest of his own.'

And so he did,—that clever daddy. You would almost have thought that he had once been a father bird himself: he did it so capitally.

Then mother boiled an egg hard, and chopped it up very fine ; and she put it in a saucer, with a little sopped bread, and a few seeds that she happened to have, that birdie might please his own taste. And they put

the saucer of food down first, and a tiny doll's cup of water by it, in case he might be thirsty, and then sprinkled a little gravel on the table to serve for salt, you know. Afterwards, Master Dickey was introduced into his new nest, which he seemed to like very well. Then over all went the sieve, to keep him safe. And so he was left to his slumbers.

Only, next morning, the children let birdie out, and fed him with a spoon ; and May told her little brother that, if he got well, Dickey should be his pet, though she found him.

So, you see, Johnny got a dear little bird of his own after all. And he said :—



Johnny has got a dear little bird of his own after all.

‘ Me so glad the cruel boys didn’t get all the ’ickle birds.’

‘ Yes,’ said May. ‘ But I think it is time you forgot about those boys, Johnny. Perhaps, if you had been a big boy, you would have done just the same.’

‘ Me wouldn’t, me sure !’ cried Johnny, indignantly. ‘ Me isn’t a cruel boy ; is me ?’ and he got very red as he spoke.

‘ No ; but perhaps they are taking care of the others ; you don’t know.’

‘ Yes,’ said the little man ; ‘ but the papa and mamma don’t like it, me sure. Me dare say they is c’ying for their babies.’

‘ I know it wasn’t good to take

the nest,' returned May, gravely. 'But, you know, Johnny, you sometimes do naughty things, too.'

'Me doesn't take nests,' replied Johnny, positively. 'Me know that is very bad—badder than anything.' And then, after seeming to think a minute, he added, vehemently, 'Me sure Jesus never took nests when He was down here.'

'No; He never did anything cruel; that's certain,' said May. 'When Jesus Christ was a boy, He was always a good boy. The Bible says He "did no sin." But do you know, Johnny, though He was always good to every one, every one was not good to Him. Lots of

people said unkind things, and did unkind things to Him, and often they tried to kill Him. That was because He told them when they were not good. People don't like to be told that they do bad things; do they ?'

'No; me dare say those bad boys wouldn't,' returned the determined little fellow.

'Nor you, either, Johnny,' said his sister. 'Don't you know that we should always think about our own bad ways, and try to forget what other people do ?'

CHAPTER XXIV.

JOHNNY'S PET LOST AND FOUND AGAIN.



AD to say, however, somehow or other Master Dickie gave them the slip that day, and got away; so poor Johnny sobbed himself to sleep, and woke late next morning.

You can fancy his joy, therefore, when he opened his eyes to see May standing by his bed-side, with the lost pet safe in a new cage, and to hear her say how she found the poor little thing not far from the house,



The little bird will be safer in its own house.

all cold, and hungry, and frightened. He had not been able to get far, and seemed quite glad to see her again, and to be nursed and fed, and put into the cage which grandfather had sent them.

Its little master was in a great state of excitement—so glad to have dickie back, and so afraid that he would not be happy shut up in, what seemed to him, a prison.

But May comforted him, and said, 'The dear little bird will be safer in his own house, Johnny.'

'Yes,' said Johnny; 'but me wouldn't like to be in there. Do good boys ever be put in prison, May?'

'Not now; at least, not in Eng-

land,' said May, wondering what could make him talk so.

'They were once, and good men, too; me heard granddaddy read about it,' answered the little man.

'What! did you hear?' exclaimed May. 'I thought you were making a house.'

'Me did hear; me often hear when me playing; and mammy said they serve good Lord Jesus just the same—least, they kill Him. What did the bad men do it for, May May?'

'Because He was good,' answered the little girl, wondering all the while at her Johnny-boy. 'He let them, though, or else they couldn't have done it, because He was God,'

she added. 'He always meant to die for us. We are so bad ; we couldn't ever have gone up to live with God if He hadn't. All the people in the world deserve to be sent away from God, you know ; but don't you remember the hymn that I say every morning, tells us that

" Out of pity, Jesus said
He'd bear our punishment instead."

' Me sink Jesus was very good, gooder than anybody,' answered the little laddie ; ' but me wouldn't have killed Him. Me couldn't be so bad.'

' Ah, you don't know ; if you do little bad things now, when you are big, you will do great bad things,' said May, sagely.

‘Me going to leave off doing *any* bad things, May May,’ answered our little laddie in his own positive little way. ‘Me going to be kind to everybody : to ‘ou, and to Tommy Taylor, and to Wolf, and to dickie, and everybody. And if me kind, me must let dickie out sometimes, ‘cause me sure he won’t like being in prison.’

‘Oh ! he won’t think it a prison long,’ said May, cheerfully. ‘Soon he’ll be quite proud of his own house, and very likely he won’t let any one else go into it if he can help it ; so father says.’

THE END.



